CHARLOTTE GRACE O'BRIEN

SELECTIONS FROM HER WRITINGS AND CORRESPONDENCE WITH A MEMOIR BY STEPHEN GWYNN

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CHARLOTTE GRACE O'BRIEN

CHARLOTTE GRACE O'BRIEN
IN EARLY LIFE.

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INTRODUCTORY MEMOIR

PREFATORY

This memorial volume has been undertaken by me in consultation with my cousin, Miss Nelly O'Brien, elder of the two nieces who stood almost in the relation of daughters to Charlotte O'Brien. To her were left all books and papers, along with the beloved and beautiful home at Ardanoir; and her consent has been given to the publication of whatever is included in these pages.

The book has inevitably been put together in haste. My project was simply to furnish the necessary setting for a selection from Charlotte O'Brien's correspondence, from her writings, nearly all of which have a biographical or autobiographical significance, and from the printed accounts of her public work. With more time at command, I might have condensed and arranged better what I had to say. It is not willingly that I have sent out in such imperfect form what has been in the fullest sense a labour of love.

S. G.

Nov. 1st, 1909.

INTRODUCTORY MEMOIR

IN this volume there is brought together what has seemed most valuable and most interesting in the writings of a very noble woman. Nothing has been included which does not, in the editor's judgment, reach a high standard of literary merit; but the interest of the whole collection is mainly biographical. Charlotte Grace O'Brien was among those who wrote not from the pure artistic impulse, not moved by any sense of the glory of words, but very largely out of the overflowing of a human energy which was denied its natural vent. The cruel physical disability which made of her a prisoner in herself determined that she should be the prime mover in a most needed public reform; determined that her name should be known and blessed by thousands of her countrymen and country women who never saw her; determined that her talent and her courage should bring her friendship and praise from the foremost men of her race at home and over seas. But these privileges which she won, as it were, in spite of fate, yet in a sense also by reason of fate, never atoned to her for the natural human duties and happiness as wife and mother whose lack left her life starved, but not spoilt. The story which lies behind these writings, whose moods many of them express, is sad enough, but not depressing. Her sorrows were natural and inevitable in the course of things; it was the special grace of her nature to convert them into beauty; and if there is heard again and again

the cry of the strong woman who has empty arms, it is so uttered as to waken only that generous pity which enlarges the heart and makes for understanding—so uttered also as to give solace to other hearts, which may find here their own griefs made eloquent. I, her near kinsman, who cannot remember a time when she was not a part of our close-knit family group, attempt now to set out the circumstances of her history, public and private, so far as I can with discretion, in such a way that these poems and essays may be read with full comprehension by those persons—and I trust they may be many—who may care to learn what manner of woman this was. For assuredly the story of her life is profitable and honourable to be told.

Let me say here at once that in what perhaps lay deepest, I cannot interpret—her religious life. I speak of the woman as I knew her—large, tolerant, humorous, eccentric, ready to laugh or to be laughed at; courageous physically and morally beyond all ordinary measure, and, above all, genial, fruitful in sympathy and resource. I can never picture this childless and unwedded woman without a whole attendant environment of young life. Wherever she went she made her own world—a world fertile and open to the winds and sun.

I.

Her Parentage and Childhood.

Her outlook upon life was notably affected by the singular circumstances of her father's family. She saw in her day what Michael Davitt (one of her chief heroes) has very justly called the fall of feudalism in Ireland; and she by all the ties of birth and breeding belonged to the class which was displaced by the revolution that she so warmly supported. Yet the democracy which had her

sympathies was a democracy always eager to link itself in imaginative loyalty to a past of native kingship ; and with that past Charlotte O'Brien had a direct lineal connection, to which recent events had given a new colour of vitality.

Her father's people had been dominant in Clare, socially and politically, for many generations, as resident landlords, inheriting a baronetcy conferred in the reign of William III., and representing their county continuously in Parliament. Sir Lucius O'Brien, the third baronet, was one of the leading statesmen who negotiated the establishment of " Grattan's Parliament " ; and for many years he took a leading part in its work. He died in 1797, and was replaced by Sir Edward, Miss O'Brien's grandfather, who voted against the Act of Union, which led slowly, but surely, to the destruction of all that he and his stood for. These people were loyalists and Protestants ; but their loyalty was to the King of Ireland ; their life, in so far as it was carried outside their own county, centred in the Irish metropolis. The Union shifted that centre, and many things with it.

Sir Edward's successor, the fifth baronet, Sir Lucius, did not care to go to Westminster ; but the representation of the county town, Ennis, devolved upon the second son, William Smith O'Brien, an estated gentleman of some four thousand a year in the County Limerick. Sir Edward, finding the estates heavily dipped—and not proposing to profit by the opportunity to replenish his coffers which the Union negotiations offered—married the daughter of a large creditor, old Mr. Smith, a moneylending ex-attorney, who waived his mortgages on the Dromoland property, and settled upon the second son the handsome Limerick estate, with its house, Cahirmoyle, which was his own habitation, and where,

in Charlotte O'Brien's childhood, his ghost still walked in snuff-coloured suit and kneebreeches.*

William Smith O'Brien entered Parliament in 1826 as a loyal supporter of the Union—a moderate man, as all his predecessors had been before him. But the Parliament which he entered was not the Parliament of Ireland; it was an assembly deaf and blind to the stir of those forces which were represented by O'Connell; and in 1844 O'Brien found himself standing by O'Connell in the demand for Repeal. And, very naturally, O'Connell, champion of the Catholic democracy—champion, that is, of the native race which had been driven under foot in the seventeenth century and kept there through the eighteenth—stressed the fact that his new ally was not merely a wealthy Protestant landlord, but represented one of the ancient kingly families of Ireland.

The position which the O'Briens of Dromoland held was, from an English point of view, analogous to that of some younger branch of the FitzGeralds or Butlers. They represented, indeed, a Celtic and not an Anglo-Norman line; but they had intermarried again and again with the Anglo-Normans, and with Cromwellian or Puritan settlers; they were simply a normal part of the wealthier gentry of Ireland, with claims to the reversion of a peerage. But to an Irish understanding the case was very different. The FitzGeralds, Butlers, and the rest owed their nobility to grants of the English Crown; the O'Briens had been lords in Clare and outside of Clare from before the dawn of written history; they had given

* The story is that Sir Edward in his difficulties consulted Mr. Smith. "The best thing you can do," said Mr. Smith, "is to marry one of my daughters, and I may tell you, Charlotte is my favourite." Sir Edward took he hint, and in this way the name Charlotte came into the family.

to Ireland the greatest king—indeed the only true king—of all Ireland; and the successors of Brian of the Tribute, although with territory curtailed again and again till they were driven back into their original fastness west of the Shannon, had there maintained independent and princely state, and had contracted treaties with European powers, down to the reign of Henry VIII. When they gave up the struggle it was on such terms that two branches of the line were ennobled—Murrough the Tanist, successor by Irish law to Conor, the last king of Thomond, receiving the Earldom of Thomond for life and the barony of Inchiquin for transmission; Donough, Conor's heir by English law, getting the barony of Ibrickan and the reversion of the Earldom.

These grants involved the adoption of the reformed religion by the grantees; but one branch of the family which remained Catholic—the O'Briens of Carrigaholt—was ennobled after the Restoration with the Viscounty of Clare; and though Sir Daniel O'Brien and his son did not wear their honours long in Ireland—for the Williamite war drove them out—their title was carried like a flag wherever the Irish Brigade charged or rallied, down to its crowning glory at Fontenoy.

But the Jacobite Earldom of Clare died out before 1800, and the line of Donough had gone before it; while the descendants of Murrough the Tanist, who were raised in 1800 to the Marquisate of Thomond, became absentee landlords, ranking rather by their English than their Irish title.

Thus, from the point of view of Thomond and of Ireland, the true representative of the ancient Irish Kings was the resident head of the family; though it was not till 1856 that the elder line became extinct, and Sir Lucius O'Brien of Dromoland, tenth in descent from the last independent King of Thomond, succeeded

to the title of Lord Inchiquin. In the view of Ireland, therefore, William Smith O'Brien, Member of Parliament for Limerick, who in 1844 took his stand beside O'Connell in Conciliation Hall, was brother of Brian Boroihme's légal representative, and was lifted by the acclamation of his clan to a kind of sovereignty.

Such considerations appealed to the imagination of Ireland, and to Smith O'Brien's own imagination, for he had in marked measure the pride of race; but it was a pride which taught him that his duty was to brave all risks at the head of his people and in their defence. This traditional claim to authority gave him a special weight with the then rising Young Ireland Party, who insisted strongly upon a revival of interest in Ireland's remoter past; and the fact that he was a Protestant marked him out still more evidently as their leader at a moment when O'Connell (aged and worn) was being driven more and more into a sectarian attitude.

Even in 1846, when he parted company with O'Connell, O'Brien was still a constitutionalist; but the crisis of the Irish famine, the apathetic stupidity of the British Parliament, their deafness to Irish representations while the ghastliest of national tragedies was in progress, drove him to sheer despair. 1848, the year of revolutions, spread its wave of contagious excitement to the righteously indignant champions of Irish freedom. "I do not profess disloyalty to the Queen of England," said Smith O'Brien, in his last speech at Westminster, "but it shall be the study of my life to overthrow the dominion of this Parliament over Ireland. I would gladly accept the most ignominious death rather than witness the sufferings and indignities inflicted by this Legislature upon my countrymen during the last thirty years." To such a frame of mind had this honourable and peaceable country gentleman been driven; and

he gave earnest of his words a few months later when he took the field in hopeless revolt. He was captured, was tried for high treason, and sentenced, in October, 1848, to be hanged, drawn and quartered. A writ of error was moved, and final judgment not obtained from the House of Lords till May, 1849, when the sentence was confirmed, but commuted by the Crown to transportation for life. On July 29, 1849, the ship that carried him and three comrades set sail for Tasmania. All the preceding winter he had been lodged in Kilmainham.

The story of his convict life need not be here recalled. In 1854 he was granted a pardon on condition that he did not set foot in the United Kingdom. In May, 1856, that condition was removed, and he returned home.

Amid such circumstances did Charlotte O'Brien's life begin. She was born on November 23, 1845, a year whose luxuriant promise was cut short by the first great failure of the potato crop. She was a child too young to remember how the leaders of the Young Ireland Party came to Cahirmoyle—in days before the rising—brave in their green uniforms. She was only three years old when the sentence of death was passed; but she must have remembered days when the family were in lodgings near Kilmainham Gaol—days when her youngest brother, Charles Murrough O'Brien, was baptised actually within the prison walls.

Yet, as is shown by the series of Sonnets which sets to verse the memories of her childhood, these heavy clouds were scarce noticed by the children. Smith O'Brien, before he took the field in 1848, had executed a deed transferring his property to trustees, to be held for his wife; and when he left Ireland he gave her the bidding which is recorded by his daughter:—

> "Go back to our estate,
> Back to our poor, back to our broken land."

Introductory Memoir

I do not know how far my grandmother shared her husband's political convictions, which were reprobated by all his kin, and by all the society to which he and she belonged, in which they had lived their lives; for she was daughter of a County Limerick gentleman, Joseph Gabbett of High Park. But she was a loyal and devoted wife to him. What she was to her children is written in the sonnet called "The Mother."

The children were many—five sons and two daughters, twelve years dividing the eldest from the youngest. My mother was five years older than her sister, and belonged to the senior of two groups into which the family fell, as families tend to do. Charlotte O'Brien's closest tie was with her younger brother, Charles; and indeed her nature was boyish rather than a girl's.

Outside that immediate family circle was the wider circle of cousins, and in those days Dromoland Castle, Sir Lucius O'Brien's house, was a kind of second home for all the clan. In the pinch after the famine, mortgage annuities could not be paid, and the O'Briens made a common purse and lived in Dromoland, whole families together, for months at a time. I have added a sonnet which I find in manuscript along with the Cahirmoyle group, commemorative of this home also.

School made another rallyingpoint or centre, for that generation still belonged to the days when Irish gentry lived their life in Ireland. The whole O'Brien clan went to St. Columba's College, near Dublin, and Lucius O'Brien was septimus when his turn came to go there. Smith O'Brien's eldest son, Edward William, was eldest of that generation of cousins; he was O'Brien maximus on the school rolls, and passed into Trinity College (where the whole clan followed him). In another sense the school was a family centre, for my father came there a junior Fellow of T. C. D., in 1856, and made close

friends with the clan. In 1862 he married Lucy O'Brien, Charlotte's elder sister.

But, of course, Cahirmoyle was the true centre of all that experience which covered the first sixteen years of Charlotte O'Brien's life—closing with her mother's death in 1861. It was the life of a big old-fashioned Irish countryhouse, with farm attached to it and garden, and tenants and dependants of all kinds, making as it were part of the family. It was typical of the homes of the old-fashioned Irish gentry, and it was the extreme type of its kind. There was no lack of culture, children were taught to use their brains as well as their bodies for play; but there was less stiffness and ceremony than was common in houses of the better sort. Perhaps there was too little; the young people grew up great despisers of dress and all its niceties. But at all events those who remember it remember it as a children's paradise, and no one was more at home in it than the girl who loved order so little and loved nature so much. The sonnets tell of many of her joys; but her own personality and her own peculiar delights are better given in this chapter—written as part of an unpublished sketch in prose, entitled "Paddy Kiely." It is a picture in homelier manner than the sonnets of the "old home"; and it is her own picture of herself as a child. The chapter is headed "An Odd Pair:"—

'The next morning at a seasonable hour, having talked things over with Biddy, Paddy started to go up to the "Great House" to see his friend and employer, Mr. O'Brien, and consult him about the lost money. His way lay over a large open field which commanded a fair and restful view of rich and partly wooded, widespreading plain land. The great limestone plain of central Ireland extended to the extremely distant horizon, but was

bordered and indented, north, south and east, by detached blue hills and the Galtee Mountains, whereas the whole west and south-west was filled by the near background of heavy rounded, steep slopes which form the eastern ridge of the long range extending far into Kerry, called Slieve Luachra ("the rushy mountains"). Scenes like this in Ireland are so glorified by wonderful atmospheric effects, caused by the great mass of transparent moisture suspended in the air, that residents alone can really fully realise the ever-varying loveliness of their country; and in truth, one man with another, I think rich and poor mostly do realise it. I have seen a poor "innocent"—an idiot who could not put two sensible words together—apparently as deeply wrapt in the contemplation of a glorious river sunset as any poet. God only knows if the wonderful light and colour could reach his poor broken intellect. Needless to say, the beauty of his home was not lost on Paddy.

'The said Paddy had a habit of wearing his coat tied by the sleeves round his neck; his shirt, open, showed partly a large and very hairy breast, and a strong cudgel supported his slightly lame walk—a long, swinging slouch. Truth to tell, he did not hurry himself as a rule, and now, wrapped in the prevailing beauty, he was maundering slowly along, but rolled round, lifting his old hat with one hand and sticking his lighted pipe in his pocket with the other, when he heard childish and hot-breathed yells imploring him to stop. It was his special friend, one of the children of the "Great House," and a wild little tomboy she looked as Paddy greeted her; he was used to her, however.

'"Arrah then, and is it you, then, Miss t-Charlot? 'Tis luck ye are not in the schoolroom after all, this fine day. Troth and 'twould be like putting one foot in the grave to stay in the house of a morning like to this.

I didn't wish ye good morning yet, Missy, and may God that gives us the fine air give ye the health to inj'y it."

'Miss t-Charlot was panting too hard (being fat and scant of breath) to make any verbal reply, but caught firm hold of Paddy's hand and stick, thereby incommoding him not a little. He stooped down to free his hand, and looked under a very big crumpled, pink sunbonnet at a fat, rosy, yellow-haired cutty, who, terrible to relate, was a "holy show," with a tremendous black eye and bruised forehead. Paddy threw up his hands and set back a bit in horror. "Now, glory be to God! Miss t-Charlot, and what have you been doing at all, at all? Faix and it's well it's not kilt out ye were! How did it ever happen ye? Glory be to God! what a collop of a girl ye are!"

'Miss t-Charlot did not deign to answer his questions. She had come for stories, and stories she would have. So, ignoring her wounds out came her stock-in-trade question—"Paddy, tell me, did you see the fairies to-day?"

'"'Tisn't the fairies did that to ye, Missy? Tell me now, true, how ye got it?"

'"It's well enough now, Paddy, it was the back of the hatchet that hit me when the boys were cutting trees in the old lane—I went in behind them." (N.B.—"boys" was a generic name for all available brothers and cousins.)

'"Well, Miss, it just BANGS BANAGHER to see how yourself and Master Donough is ever and always hurting of yourselves. 'Tis a wonder the both of you is alive this day, and look at Mr. t-Searlais now and he so qui't and good! Did it hurt ye terrible, ye poor child? But sure ye'll be well before you're twice mari'et!"

'"That's it, Paddy, and I'll tell you a secret, Paddy. It did hurt me terrible, but I knew I would be scolded—

awful—and the boys mad with me, so I just ran home and never said anything, only stuck my head in the basin ; but it got so black they all saw it in the morning. Never mind that—did you see the fairies ? "

' Paddy turned round to cough (and spit) and collect his thoughts for the insatiable. " Well, Miss t-Charlot, I didn't to say *see* the fairies this good while back, but sure if I didn't I saw something you would think would be as strange to look at—ye know, Missy."

' Missy began to bounce about in great glory, thereby destroying Paddy's balance, as she cried out—" O Paddy, what was it at all ? Hurry up and tell me ! "

' " Come over and hether, then, Miss, you're on my sh-tick side, and I'm mortal stiff to-day after the d-tunder and rain all last night. There now, alanna, ye can hould on to me now all right. Well, Missy" (Paddy would have his little joke), " shall I tell ye the story of little Red Garters ? "

' Missy stamped and slapped the big hand she held. " Bother little Red Garters ! Tell me what you saw."

Little Red Garters was a wraith of a story that never came to anything, and Paddy, throwing himself back on his stick, his eyes gleaming with fun. " Arrah, then, Miss, isn't little Red Garters a very purty little story. Listen now. Once upon a time——"

' This beginning was instantly checked by a furious personal assault from Miss t-Charlot. After some rough play they stood panting. " I'll pinch you to death, Paddy, if you go on humbugging along this way ! I'll just get a great pin and stick it into you. I'll knock the hat off you." A furious assault after the hat ensued, Paddy ducking and diving, and balancing himself on his stick. When they were both out of breath, Paddy began again. " Hould on ! Missy. Hould on ! I'm kilt entirely ! Let me get the breath of me. Well, acushla, we'll keep that little story."

'"It isn't a story at all, only humbugging, and it's what Peggy says to me when I want a *real* story. Now, GO ON."

'Paddy, throwing himself back on his stick, looked at her with a quizzical air, his blue eyes, the abiding home of the delight of life, love, and beauty, 'presently' brimming over with the joy of battle and innocent fun as he counted the cost of a little more teasing. Miss t-Charlot stood with stern determination in her eye, her now entirely demoralised sunbonnet hanging by one string over her shoulder, and containing in its recesses a black chenille net, her tawny yellow hair in a direfully tangled mass, and her grey eyes gleaming from a very hot, red face. The features were cut in a rude, non-beautiful, but energetic type, Celtic in the extreme. A very weather-beaten scarlet 'garibaldi' (then in fashion) and brown Holland skirt, did not hide a strong, sturdy pair of white-stockinged fat legs. She looked a combatant worthy of his steel as they stood—a pair of duellists measuring their swords. Paddy gave the first feint—"Aych, then, Missy, 'Little Red Garters' is no good. It's truth ye say. I was thinking to tell ye the story of the three dogs. Did ye ever hear that, alanna?"

'The enemy hesitated. Then—"You *may* tell that to me, Paddy, if it is not long. *Then* you must tell me what you saw or I'll kill you!"

'"Arrah, then, be aisy, Missy! Well, onst upon a time there was a great Lord and Iarl, and he with a powerful big house entirely, and he that fond of hunting. Well and all, he had the three beautiful hounds to him, and the funny names he put on them were 'Sh-top,' 'Whisht' and 'Hould yer Tongue.' Well one fine mothing and he was going out hunting, and he callin' the dogs. Now, Missy, are ye mindin' the story or are ye mindin' the crows?"

'"Bother the crows! Go on."

'"Well, Missy, tell me. Do you mind the names of thim dogs?"

'"Of course I do—'Stop,' 'Whisht,' and 'Hold yer Tongue,' Paddy."

'Paddy threw himself back on his stick delighted. "Arrah, then, Missy, that's all I'm wantin' to do myself! I'll just sh-top, whisht, and hould me tongue the same as yer honour orders me; and, with respect to you, may I have a pull at the pipe?" He began then pretending to fumble in his pocket for the pipe. Miss t-Charlot stood still growling with indignation, to see how she had been circumvented. Then—"Is that *all* the story, Paddy?" He winked at her, but stood silent, holding the pipe in his hand, whilst her eyes flashed, and she looked around for a more effective weapon than her little fat fists afforded. Not seeing any, she began once more—"Is that ALL, Paddy?

'"Ye tould me to whisht, Missy."

'"There isn't any more, then?"

'Paddy bent his head on one side and gave voice to his preternatural miaw! miaw!

'Missy on this shrieked and stamped, and clenched her two fists in despair. "Paddy—O what *will* I do to him? Is that *all*, Paddy?"

'Paddy gave in a little. "That's all, Missy."

'"Very well. Go on now with what you saw."

'"Arrah, then, let me have me pipe. Ye know ye tould me to hould me tongue."

'Miss t-Charlot bounced away from him in a red hot fury; then, seeing a big stone on the ground, an idea crossed her wild little head, and she came back carrying it in her two hands, and planted herself, with her fat legs well apart, straight in front of the enemy, who, filled with curiosity what she would do next, balancing himself back on his stick, stood prepared for eventualities.

'Miss t-Charlot, eyeing him "wid the two eyes of her like as if she'd stick me," as he afterwards told Biddy, spoke up in a steady, restrained voice:

'"Now, Paddy. Listen here. You tell me what you saw just straight out and no more nonsense, and if you don't, I'll just take this stone I have in my hand and I'll pound my own sore eye till it bleeds again! There, then! Now GO ON."

'"Arrah, then, aragal! For the life of ye don't do that, and I'll be as good as good!" Then in an audible aside ("Glory be to God! She's that tirrible divilmint of a skitherum she'd just do it as soon as she'd say it!") Then stretching out his hands he held her firm. "For the blessed saints! and may the flowers of glory crown ye! And put away that great ugly stone out of yer hand and come next and nigh me, and I'll tell ye every whole thing will come into my head."

'"Honour bright, now, Paddy?"

'"Honour bright, Missy, and I'll be rale good! Come alongside of myself and we'll go along qui't."

'Miss t-Charlot having thus asserted the right of the strong hand uppermost, and nipped rebellion in the bud, flung away the stone, and taking the big, rough, but naturally soft hand in hers, trotted along rubbing it against her cheek in blissful content of victory.

'So they wandered on in the beautiful morning, Paddy and Missy, both silent for a while, awaiting the clear thought that was to follow their long rampage. At last Paddy began:—

'"God's sake, Missy! but ye're the terror of a girleen—but I'm dead fond of ye all through, and I'm going to tell ye every whole thing now right out, so keep listening to me and be qui't."

'"I don't want to talk, Paddy. I'll knock the heads off the rag weeds. You go on."

'Paddy cleared his throat, and, settling down to his easy slouch of a walk, began his tale.

'"Well, Missy, you know, mindin' the place and the garden, I does be up very early intirely in the summer, and 'twould put joy in the heart of ye to see the long grey streaks coming into the clouds, maybe three o'clock or maybe four in the morning, and all as still as still, and the cows lying there on the field without a stir out of them, and the white dew rising from them. You'd barely think they was alive they'd be that still."

'"Yes, but, Paddy, how can you see them in the night?"

'"O yeh, Miss, 'tis light to see everything near all the night these times, but the colour you would not see it; and them yellow ragweeds that does be looking in the evening light like as if they were all the red goold—the same as your own hair, Missy—in the light of the night they would be next or nigh white. Did ye know, Miss, those Bohalauns (ragweeds) is the fairies' horses. The white horses and the grey horses, and the black horses and the brown horses. Well and all, 'twas like one of them horses I seen meself with me own two eyes, and this was how it was. One morning lately I was up that early, and the light was coming into the sky, and the long white streaks where the sun was rising, and sure I saw nothing at all only the long grass lying out there still and soft with a grey dew on it, and the light comin' creepin' over it. And it's then ye'd see the thraneens (that's what we call ould withered grass, Missy, that the cattle would lave after them); well, ye'd see them ugly thraneens, you wouldn't give the back of your hand to in the daytime, themselves now—Glory be to God! How beautiful they were! The purtiest things ye ever seen, with pur'rls and diamonds and every colour you would see in the rainbow, all hangin' around and about them, and the silken nets flying in the air above. Arrah,

Missy, 'tis God that knows how to make them poor things grand intirely when it is His holy will and pleasure." Paddy here took off his hat, crossed himself, and offered his silent prayer. Miss t-Charlot stood observant but silent.

'After a while Paddy began again.

'"Well, Missy, I was looking at them and watchin' the sun splendid grand, comin' up between the clouds, and 'twould plaze you to see Knock Feerna and the Galtees standing out agin the light and the white fogs about them, and they looking the twice't as high as you'd think them in the daytime, and the finest colours all over them and the sky and the arth. I was taken up lookin' at it and not thinking, when of a sudden I looked round, and up over agin the crown of the near hill foreninst me against the sunlight, and what would I see standin there? O Missy, you wouldn't believe it from what I could tell you, but it's God's own trut', and the quarest thing I seen yet—there was like a horse standing there on the crown of the hill, near enough, and it like as if it were mortal big, and every hair on its body was shining like as if the silver light were springin' out of it. 'Tis truth I'm tellin' you, and no lie. Standin' there in the night and the early mornin' alone, and not a one with me but myself and the Lord God, the fright came on me, and the wonder to look at the thing before me two eyes."

'"But what was it at all, Paddy?"

'"Well, Missy, sure as I stood there watchin' it, and it shining as if it were made of the light of the sun and—or, Missy, like the way they draws them pictures of the holy saints and the Blessed Virgin. Then I begins to think maybe it is nothin' at all but the sun itself shinin, through and through the wet hairs, and sure that's what it was when I went anigh to it, and 'twas that and the

steam comin' out of it made it look so big. You couldn't think, Missy, the way the light shone out of it and all over it—the legs and body, and all a real wonder it was to see."

'"O! Paddy, how I do wish I had been with you. O! If they would but let me get up early! Early! I did run out at five o'clock the other day, but that's no good. I want to be out all night under the stars—but they won't let me."

'"Well now, Missy, thinkin' of it, would not you think it quare how it was, all over light. It wouldn't be that wonder if the light would be all round, behind and the body like dark in the front; but to see it shinin' as if the fire were comin' out of it *all over*, wouldn't you think that very strange? 'Tis no wonder the ould anncient people would be talking of the fairies, the quare things one sees now and again."

'Miss t-Charlot took Paddy's hand, and, patting it over softly, said under her breath:—"Do you *really* think there are fairies, Paddy? O! I wish I could see them."

'"Faix, then, Missy, myself doesn't rightly know. 'Tis sure the ould people tell the quare tales, but the country is changed intirely, and all the people going out of it, same as myself one time, and the old stories—they went with the ould Irish-speaking, and a pity it is that same!"

'Miss t-Charlot, all alert at getting Paddy on a new subject, danced about, made a dive at the ragweeds, and returning, commanded.

'"Now you may tell me how you went to America. I don't remember that."

'"Yourself was but a nursing baby that time, Missy. 'Twas the famine years, and God be with you, Missy, but ye may thank God all the days of your life ye don't

remimber it. It wasn't to say *too* bad in this county, alongside of the kingdom of Kerry, but 'bad's the best' the same time all over Ireland, and myself went off to Canada, away out of it all. Och, if I could tell yer honour of all I seen, and the ships I went in, and that was comin' out after me, and the poor craturs in them out of the black country in the west and the north, all dying of the famine fever and the cholera. Did your honour ever obsarve, Missy, on some of the dures of the ould cabins the big red letters I. H. S. painted on them?"

'Miss t-Charlot stood stock still considering. At last—"I tell you, Paddy, I'm sure I saw them in Clare when we were going to Kilkee last year. What did they mean?"

'"'Tis the Holy Name of Jesus" (lifting his hat and crossing himself). "May the Lord God give us grace to come to Him! It was the cholera, Missy. 'Twould be in the house, and no one to dare to go in, barring them that had a right to take care of the sick. We would all know when we could see the same letters on the door. But in the ships—we were there—and after us the people flying the country comin' on board with the death in them, and in the morning you would see them, the beautiful girl or the fine claver boy, and in the evening its thrown down to the sea they would be. God's sake, Missy, we won't be talking of it. It takes the heart out of me when I think of what I seen them times!"

'Paddy drew his hand across his eyes and stood for a moment in prayer. When Missy had secured the hand again she asked quietly.—"But tell me, Paddy, what happened to your own self?"

'"Well, Missy, a place they call Grosile they put me out of the ship like to die (as many a one did, being lifted from the floor of the steerage before ever he would

be set down on the firm earth; they do say there was six thousand buried off of the ships in that same place). But, glory be to God! that gave me the strength to put it apast me the same time. 'Twas the fever I had, and bad too. You wouldn't think it to look at me now, and me falling into flesh; but ye could nigh put me through a weddin' ring when they tould me to get out of the sheds and make room for the more and the more that was comin'. They did their best in Canada, but what could ye do when the whole lot of us were next to nigh dead comin' ashore. Glory be to God! don't talk of it, Miss!"

'He paused, then began again. "I had never a likin' for that country the same as ould Ireland, and sure enough, when I was nearly better, I shook me four bones together, and when I got the price of me passage arned, I just walked home again, and let thim go to America that wants to! Faix and I'd rather ate the pitaties here than the best of thratement over the say! And that's trut', Miss; and sure enough, when I came home nothing would serve me but go coortin! Biddy was the fine strappin' woman the same time, and herself and Peggy were above at the Great House, and by the same token, Peggy was the first Christian soul that ever had ye in her hands barrin' the nurse."

'Miss t-Charlot began to consider things.

'"Well, but, Paddy, Hanny is a lot older than I am."

'"'Tis so, Missy—(aside, 'the child is that sharp')—Hanny isn't me raal daughter at all. She's a brother's daughter of mine, and the father and mother of her died in the bad years, and 'twas partly that same brought me home the way she wouldn't be lost intirely. And Biddy herself was ever and always good to her. Thanks be to God we did the right thing by her, and a good girl she was, and a purty one. Aych, Miss t-Charlot, 'tis

tired discoorsin' ye I am, and the master will be mad angry to say I would not be in the garden after them pitaties all the morning. Be the same token, it's himself I must see about that misfortunate Larry."

'Miss t-Charlot clung to his hand hard and tight to keep him, but he freed himself, and sent her off, saying: "Now, Missy, rin in with ye to Peggy and make her clane ye, for ye're all in a poultoon of a mess, and they'd be fit to bate ye if ye go in at the front."

'Miss t-Charlot ran off the kitchen way. Paddy, balancing on his stick, watched her, ejaculating to himself at last—"Be the blazes, but the master will be dancing mad! I'll get a sh-troke of work done before ever I go next or nigh him."

'In the bright sunny drawingroom of what the peasantry around called the "Great House," though really it was both small and old, partly an old castle or keep and partly an added more modern square building, sat Paddy's employers and friends—the master and the mistress. Flowers and sunshine, books and dogs were there in plenty, but neither money nor smart furniture. It was, indeed, in all ways a regular Irish home, crowded with merry children, none too tidy, but more home-like than more showy homes. The oft-recurring question of Paddy was under discussion.

'"Really, Lucy, I think he must go. It's impossible to make him work. Of course his caring the place at night is an excuse, but that is only occasionally needed, yet he does hardly anything. It's a great pity for him, but what is one to do?"

'"Oh! William, the children would just break their hearts! See how they are always after him."

'"If one could be sure what the attraction is. What do they find to talk of constantly? Is it good to have

the girls after these rough men? I have a great mind to forbid it."

'At this minute a knock came to the door and Peggy entered—old-fashioned, with pretty crossed shawl and cap tied under her chin, very neat and clean and old world. She herself, though past middle age, had then and to the end of her life, the beauty of an exquisite fitness to her dress and work.

'"What is it, Peggy?" said her mistress.

'"It's Kiely, ma'am, that's asking to see the master outside in the hall."

'"It's he, is it!" said the master. "Well, Lucy, I'll go and see him, or rather let him come here. Go call him, Peggy—but what's it all about?"

'"Himself will tell you, your honour. It's the boy that married Norry is in trouble."

'"Oh! the unfortunate Larry! I hope it's nothing too bad this time. You had best call Paddy in. I must give him a hearing anyhow, Lucy, not that it's the least use!"

'Paddy here entered, looking, it must be owned, not quite so self-possessed as usual. He had left his beloved stick outside and stood hat in hand, watching as the master walked up and down the room. He knew well he was in for a lecture, and was reckoning up his defences. Had he known himself, or had anyone else known it, his best defence would have been that he had "wasted" his morning in teaching one of his master's children to see and think and feel more successfully than any other teacher of her childhood.

'"Well, Paddy, what's the matter now? How about those potatoes? Are they blighted?"

'Paddy passed his hand over his forehead, shifted a bit feeling vainly for his stick, then bowing a little to the mistress, answered—

'"Yer honour! In respect to yourself and her lady-

ship" (another side inclination sweeping her into the conversation as a protector). "'twould heart scald ye to look at them! The finest crop ye ever seen and the divil a one of them but the black mark is on it. Glory be to God! yer honour, when I was turning of them up this morning."——

'"Paddy! *I* was in the garden this morning, but *you* were not turning the potatoes. Half-past ten and nothing done! How can you expect me to keep you?"

'Paddy, with a fine flash of indignation—"Faix, then, your honour, ye might think I was up early and down late if ye knew the trut'. 'Twas that skelping rogue of a cow!"

'"Which? What's that ridiculous name they call the red young one, Lucy?"

'"The little red hifer that jumped over the wall!" said she, imitating the brogue and the wonderful ellipsis of consonants.

'Paddy laughed a polite acknowledgement. "Musha but 'tis her ladyship that knows how to spake! An' 'twas herself then, and bad scran to her! She does be campaigning about the country, and not a fince in the place but she'll be gouraging over if it takes her in the head. Meself and Moss" (Maurice) "were bating the roads for her and the frost of the dew not off the brambles! But yer honour (saving her ladyship's presence), 'tis of me own little troubles I would want to spake."

'"Peggy tells me Larry has been getting into some more mischief? What's up now?"

'"'Tis this way, yer honour. The luck's agin some of us and we no worse nor anyone else. Ye knows yerself all the trouble poor Larry was in this time back, and he only to look at a horse he fancied. And now he wasn't (as we would say) out of that kettle but he was into the pot! He had the money, yer honour knows, for the l'y'ar, Mr.

Hornely, 'tis little he done for it, but he was kep back in the place waitin' on us, and 'tis the way he must have the money all the same. Three pound tin, yer honour, and it was long we were gatherin' that same. The likes of us does be long waiting on that much. Well, the same night after the trial what would me boy be doing but havin' a little conversation below at the Widdy McKay's, and—be this and be that—the money went from him!"

'The mistress shook her head sadly. "The old story—the publichouse."

'"'Tis true for ye, yer ladyship, and the sons of Ireland, 'tis they know it well if they weren't the world's own fools! But his honour knows it isn't with the strange l'y'ar the same as with one in the place; and what would we do at all at all to pay the money before he would be laving the countryside? and, your ladyship, poor Norry, the innocent cratur, expectin'. Faith, ma'am we're hard taken the same time."

'The mistress looked at her husband, but made no answer. After a few turns up and down the room, he gave in to the inevitable, and instead of dismissing his idle servant, came to his assistance.

'"Well, Paddy, I suppose you want me to advance the money; but I cannot trust Larry."

'"Och, yer honour! don't talk of Larry. 'Tis meself will be bound to yer honour and the mistress. Her ladyship knows well Biddy's as careful a woman as ever stept in the brogues, and meself never keeps a ha'port' but what I'd put in the pipe."

'The door opened at this moment amid the scuffling of children outside, then Peggy entered with an audible aside—("make aff wid ye, Miss t-Charlot, and don't be pinching me, or I'll pin the dish clout to yer tail next time ye come looking for the sour milk. Yer nothing

but a calf—be aff wid ye and let me spake to the master.") Once in the room and detached from "the childer." she knocked solemnly, and then shut the door in their faces.

'"Come in, Peggy," said her mistress. "What is it now?"

'"'Tis a message for Kiely, ma'am, from Biddy, if I might spake to him?"

'"What is it?" said the master. "We are talking of business."

'"'Tis so, yer honour, but 'tis the same thing. Kiely, Biddy says yer to come straight home the same minute, and to lave tazing the master. And the same is all the message I got, and it was little Dinny Houligan that came runnin' up on the bare toes of him, and to say to hurry ye."

'"You had better go home," said the master, "and see what has happened. Your mistress and I will talk over what can be done about that money."

'Paddy, turning from one to the other with an inclusive bow, straightened himself to give dignity to an oratorical ending of a difficult quarter of an hour.

'"Yer honour's honour is always a good master, and a noble lord to me, and her ladyship the same, and that ye may both reign long over us, and that ye may make yer bed in heaven. Meself will go and see what the old woman is wanting me for, and I'm not forgetting this day to ye or to yer children after ye, and may the Lord God go with ye all, on every way ye go!"

'Having thus asserted the noble right of the poor to bless, Paddy retired as from a Sovereign presence, but bearing himself with his usual calm dignity of tranquil self-possession—a grand gift of the older peasantry of Ireland which has not, I fear, passed on to their sons.'

II.

Her Early Life.

The Cahirmoyle life lasted till 1861, with one long interruption. In 1854 Smith O'Brien received a pardon conditional on his remaining out of Great Britain; his family joined him on the Continent, and they lived in Brussels till 1856, when the condition of exile was withdrawn, and he returned home. But the ordeal he had gone through left its traces and wrecked his capacity for happiness. The mother in that household was the centre of happy life, and her last days were not only clouded by the advance of disease, but also by family dissensions which arose out of the fact that Smith O'Brien, to avoid confiscation, had assigned his property to trustees for his wife and children. Now, when liberated by the criminal law, he was still bound by his own act, and he felt it—being a very proud man—as a restriction on his freedom. The weight of his resentment fell upon the eldest son, Edward, then a grown man, who had been to his mother all that a son could be, and who, in the painful position in which he was placed, behaved, by the consent of all who knew the facts, with perfect loyalty. It was a cruel time for all—husband, wife and son—and the death of her who was the peacemaker left the quarrel still open. Under these unhappy circumstances Smith O'Brien left Cahirmoyle when his wife died, in 1861, and removed with his daughters to Killiney, near Dublin, and equally near St. Columba's.

I find this passage in a manuscript essay upon the "Analysis of Character":—

"Some natures are like wall fruit, beautiful and fruit-

ful in one direction, bare and unsightly in another. For instance, we take one man—I have such a one in my thought—capable of the highest self-sacrifice, of the most massive and masculine sympathies, of honour so pure that his public name has become a symbol in his nation for honour: Was he, therefore, perfect? He was noble, he was not perfect; those very qualities that raised his public life were a difficulty in his private. Another man you will see—unselfish, kind, patient, thoughtful, having all those qualities the first failed to possess: should you, therefore, expect from him that very high nervous tension that made the first great? If you do you will probably be disappointed. Accept thankfully the loveable qualities of the second, honour the great qualities of the first; do not think to find them combined, except in the very rarest instances."

There I find indicated with tenderness and with truth, by the child to whom he was most of a hero, those limitations in Charlotte O'Brien's father out of which sprang bitterness for himself and his home.

But I think the bitterness of these days fell rather on my mother than on her younger sister, still in the schoolroom; and, naturally, the young life soon regained its cheerfulness. I have under my hand a mass of papers which commemorate "O'Brien's Feast"—a dinner given by Smith O'Brien in honour of the laurels won at Cambridge by Richard Claverhouse Jebb, whose parents came from County Limerick, and who had received the earlier half of his schooling at St. Columba's. The Jebbs then lived at Killiney, and between the families there was close fellowship.

Here is the heading of the poem, written in my mother's hand: "Some Account of the Strange and Remarkable Events which happened at a Boys' Party given at the

Kilmore House on April 2nd, 1862, by William Smith O'Brien, Gentleman, in Honour of the Achievements at the University of Cambridge of Richard Claverhouse Jebb, now Bachelor of Arts, together with a full and true description of the Persons who attended the aforesaid Party, their Habits, Character, Manners and Appearance."

The poem tells of preparations and how

> "Lucy's eyes dart fire,
> While wrangling with her loved tho' stubborn sire."

and how, after the difficulty has been met of providing plates and glasses for "a crew of five and twenty reckoned," the same Lucy (my mother)

> "Applies her most consummate skill,
> With freshest flowers four beerglasses to fill."

while the master of the house

> "Casts enquiring glances round,
> And if he nothing does, at least looks grand."

but

> "Charlotte, idle, good-for-nothing creature,
> Doth prove herself the greatest plague in nature."

Charlotte, then aged seventeen, was one of the joint authors, and she had to consent to her own condemnation. But she was always ready to admit that she had possessed no gift at any time for housewifery.

Then we read the arrival of the guests; first the clan of Jebb triumphant—

> "The Senior Classic beams in all their glances."

especially in the lovely Eglantine's—a young lady then adored by old and young in the O'Brien household. Presently arrives the St. Columba's contingent, headed by the warden and the sub-warden (Mr. Forster), and

the warden's sister aiding them to control a troop of County Limerick boys. Donough leads, and

> "Marshall, Studdert and Spring Rice
> And the three Bourkes come forward in a trice,
> And Charlie, captain of the lower school.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> With them too comes our idle cousin Robin,
> Kind as he's pleasant, half a brother he,
> His manners winning, grand his smile and free.
> Equal in idleness alike and years,
> Lucius and he outshine their college peers ;
> Like double stars they both together grow,
> Their looks their passports are where'er they go."

The present Dean of Limerick had no hand in setting out his own praises ; but his "peer in idleness alike and years" had to accept part responsibility for a very just appreciation. The writers name themselves :—

> "First, Lucy O'Brien,
> Next Charlotte O'Brien,
> Last, Robin O'Brien ;
> They are each one a scion
> Of Erin's famed lion,
> The old monarch Brian."

They joked about Brian Boru it will be seen, but he was always present in their consciousness ; he was a kind of symbol of their pride and pleasure in their clan. It is plain too that these young people had practised their wits enough to be able to string out very passable couplets which hold in them the echoes of a day's rejoicing and festivity that lasted from early dinner until evening, when after rambles by the Killiney cliffs (Charlotte accompanying the "crowd of noisy boys" in their rock-climbing, while her sister stayed sedately with the elders), they turned home for a cup of tea, and then "schoolwards at last the merry party wended."

Thus their upbringing touched life at a good many points fruitful of education. It was no small privilege

to be intimate with a household so cultured and so gifted as that from which the great Cambridge scholar sprang; but Killiney held associates of another sort, for there lived Mr. John Blake Dillon, one of Smith O'Brien's most honoured political colleagues; and his son, the John Dillon of to-day, was a contemporary of the O'Brien children. Their ways divided far in the course of Irish life; but Charlotte O'Brien when she went to visit Mr. Dillon in Kilmainham gaol saw again one whom she must have known as a child.

Killiney was no abiding city for the O'Briens. Three months after the famous feast my mother was married to the then Warden of St. Columba's, and Smith O'Brien, deprived of his closest companion, his untiring amanuensis (for he wrote unceasingly), went abroad for a solitary tour. In December of that year he wrote to Charlotte from Chambéri:—

"I often wish that you were the companion of my travels, and I half regret that I did not bring you with me. If I were to consult my own wishes, I should ask Lucius or William to bring you to Nice, but you must give another year to tuition, after which time you must be prepared to take a position in the world as the consoler of your father."

His daughter was then in her eighteenth year, and her tuition was in charge of Miss D'Arcy, a lady of good Irish family. Apparently she and her governess were back at Cahirmoyle, she turning her hand, not very prosperously, to the task of house-keeping for her brothers Edward and William, and for the youngest, Charles—always her closest comrade—who had been ordered into the country because he was growing at such a pace that his brains needed to lie fallow.

Meantime, it was settled that Edward O'Brien should take over the estate, should pay his father £2,000 a year, should keep the house open for his sisters and brothers, and subsist on what was left. The compact was the harder because he was just then marrying. That marriage was momentous in Charlotte O'Brien's life.

Among the houses most familiar to the young people of Cahirmoyle was Mount Trenchard, Lord Monteagle's home on the Shannon. The Spring Rice boys had gone with the other Limerick contingent to St. Columba's; and now, in 1863, Edward O'Brien took his bride from there—a lady of great beauty, with whom he was very passionately in love.

Over the marriage there was some attempt at a reconciliation between father and son, but the remaining year of Smith O'Brien's life was spent restlessly moving from hotel to hotel. Charlotte was much with him, and so also was his second son William, to whom the tenderest side of his nature showed itself. For this young man, in all other respects physically admirable, a bold climber, rider, and sportsman, was totally deaf and almost dumb: the infirmity of which every one of those brothers and sisters, except the eldest, had some trace was fully developed in him from birth; with the others, it was a slowly growing disease. Yet he did not allow it to cut him off from life. No one of all the clan was more popular among the cousins; certainly, too, his deafness did not prevent him from being a close and welcome companion of his father's in the latter days of that sad life.

The latest letter from Smith O'Brien to his daughter, which I have before me, is dated Feb. 10, 1864 (three days before I was born). It recalled her from St. Columba's, where she was staying with my mother, on the ground that his own health needed her care; and he spoke of

moving from Dublin to get rid of a threatening of bronchitis. The move made was to Wales, where he travelled about for some time with his son Willy before his health grew so bad that he had to lie up in the hotel at Bangor. Charlotte was sent for, and weeks of a very difficult and painful time followed. She was only nineteen. The invalid was hard to manage, and refused absolutely to see a doctor, adding terribly to the strain on those who loved him. She often recalled that trouble ; but when her own time came she acted as her father had done. His death, like hers, was due to heart failure. He died there, among strangers, in a hotel away from his own country. It was characteristic of the circumstances that arrangements should have been deliberately made so that his body should be borne from the Dublin quays to Kingsbridge on its way south in the small hours of morning, to avoid public demonstrations : characteristic of Ireland that the cortège should have passed, none the less, through streets densely lined with his countrymen and countrywomen waiting to do him that last sad honour.

His death released Charlotte O'Brien from her chief tie and bereft her of the one who most needed her. It was her nature to need to be needed, and she went to take up her home at Cahirmoyle with her eldest brother and his newly-married wife with some natural fear that she might find herself unneeded. In that hour Mary O'Brien won from her husband's sister a devotion that began in sheer gratitude : she apprehended the stormy emotions of the yet unformed mind—

> "Saw where slept
> Shadows of jealous love and tears unwept,"

and drew that unsatisfied heart into the " full flood of her rich loving " as the sonnet tells, from which I quote these words.

So began Charlotte O'Brien's last days in the old

house—for already its master was planning to replace it with a statelier home. And in these years she saw a new generation beginning to take the place of those with whom she herself had climbed trees and swung.

Edward O'Brien's eldest daughter was born on June 4, 1864: her father had to hurry from her cradle to his father's death-bed. A brother was born in 1865, a younger sister in 1866. During these years Charlotte, their aunt and mine, lived under the roof of her brother and of his wife, to whom her vehement nature gave an adoration which is expressed in the long series of sonnets printed in this book. Those were days of happiness, soon overcast. After the birth of her third child, Mary O'Brien sickened, and then followed two years of lingering in the Riviera. Charlotte was with them, and it added a poignancy to the already marked physical affliction that her fast-growing deafness made a barrier between her and the invalid and a strain on the invalid's strength.

That tragedy ended in 1868: the children were specially committed by their mother to the care of their father's sister. Charlotte O'Brien, then aged twenty-three, undertook the charge with a passion of devotion. She had more than the common woman-craving for maternity; and these were the children of one whom she had loved with a love passing the love of sisters.

> "Was it some little thing thou leftst to me.
> Some brooch, some ring, some knot of hair entwined?
> No, but thy very life, thy self, outlined
> In flesh and blood."

So she cried in a sonnet written many years later in a bitter mood. It was, in truth, "a testament" imposing a complex heritage "of joy and fear and pain she had to dree." And well might she write:—

> "O mother, who bade me a mother prove
> To thy dear babes, did I not give my love,
> My whole, my deepest heart to thee and thine?"

She gave, indeed—and at moments it seemed as if the end were bitterness—the bitterness which attends too often upon all passion given in excess, which scarcely ever fails to follow when that love rests on anything less physical, less solid, less universal than the tie of marriage or motherhood. I tell of one who was cruelly hurt in life's journey, and I must name the wounds if I am to show how the fundamental sanity of her nature healed its hurt places, leaving no dishonourable scars. Where she loved, she loved always, and though sometimes in the fret and fever of her loneliness she cried out in bitterness reproaches that were not deserved, yet always the cry, even of her bitterest moment, was a new affirmation to love on—

> "Better the stifled breath,
> The aching heart, the half-born tears that blot
> Night's stars and glorious morn, than I should move
> One step beyond thy shadow, Love, O Love."

But these agonies were of a later day, her fierce protest against sunderings which came in the inevitable course of nature. At first life went happily enough. After the return from the Riviera they lived for some years at Corgrig, a small house in Foynes, near Mount Trenchard, while the old Cahirmoyle was being pulled down, the new and stately one being built.

We, the elder sister's children, were by this time fully established at Aghnagaddy, the big rectory near Ramelton, in County Donegal—whither my father had moved within a month of Smith O'Brien's death—and the family had a second centre there, since before long Lucius O'Brien came to be my father's curate, and married and settled down there for long years; and his brother Charles was sent there that he might study with my father instead of going to college; and he too found a wife in the north. Thus it happened that a visit of the

Cahirmoyle folks to Aghnagaddy was almost a yearly occurrence; but one year we instead went there.

I carry from that visit—which must have been about 1875—the impression of a household whose inmates jarred upon each other.

Edward O'Brien resembled his father in being punctilious and punctual almost to excess. There was a strain of that tendency in the family, which found its extreme expression in his brother Willy, who fined himself sixpence for every drop of gravy or spillage of tea upon the table cloth, and paid the fine to his housekeeper. Charlotte, on the other hand—a big, large-boned woman, rough in her movements—could not enter a room without knocking things down, and as a girl had been the despair of those who wished her to tie her bootlaces. It was a tradition in the family to despise dress and fashions; and I suppose two homelier women in point of clothes than she and my mother never lived; but the elder sister had that neatness which, some said, could be traced in those children who had emerged from the nursery before Smith O'Brien disappeared out of their ken, leaving the whole discipline to his easy-going wife.

My mother's long and fine dark hair lay always close to her forehead, and was stored behind in numberless plaits. Charlotte O'Brien's light brown locks were always in admired disorder: her broad square figure—which had something of a peasant woman's dignity in its carriage—was loosely garbed in garments of her own making; and she never had the gift of delicate finish.

Altogether in the width of the world you could hardly have found a woman less fit to keep house for my uncle. Things did not go so badly while she was at Corgrig, in the little house, and could run in and out of the kitchen and bustle up the servants in her unmethodical way. But when it came

to moving into the big new house, so spacious, so beautiful, its master very naturally insisted that the equipment should be answerable to the structure; while she, on her part, was confounded by his requirements—more table napkins than she had ever dreamt of, and so on.

On deeper matters, too, they were widely sundered. She held by her father in politics, he by a somewhat aggressive utilitarianism. Even his admiration for her character and talents—and it was great—led to trouble; for he interested himself in all her schemes, which were many, and her writings, for she had begun to write. But he had the scholar's instinct developed in excess, he demanded finish, form, all the qualities which she lacked; and she was never enough of an artist to submit even while she raged. She raged without submitting, insisted that her work must be spontaneous, or would be nothing.

And undoubtedly her growing deafness must have made against close companionship, and thus rendered it difficult for her to combat the fierce self-withdrawal which fell on Edward O'Brien after his early bereavement. Between the two was always strong mutual admiration and regard for each other's great abilities; but there was little harmony. I remember my aunt at Cahirmoyle as a somewhat harassed woman—harassed, too, by that burden of teaching which my mother's example justified her to assume, but for which she had no gift, while my mother had an aptitude amounting almost to genius. But in Donegal I remember her free from domestic cares, the delightful and delighted companion of our elders and us children on long excursions, when there would be much talk of the haunts of various wild flowers and ferns.

The earliest of the poems which I print—that on "Winter," dated 1869—bears witness to her close and

loving observation of all forms of nature, and to the school in which she made her studies of poetry. One feels the influence of Cowper there almost more than that of Wordsworth.

> "I would that men and women-poets singing
> Would sing of things they see and feel and touch,"

she writes in a rough verse somewhere, and certainly she minded her own rede. Nature is always concrete and visualised in her poems, and the best of her prose is definite as a gardener's manual. But I do not think that in these years she wrote more than a few stray poems: she was too busy housekeeping, and mothering her charges—somewhat austerely. The traditions of "Sandford and Merton" were not unfelt in that family. Wasps used to be set to crawl on the children's hands, that the young might learn to avoid being stung by not flinching; and as for the refusal to handle any living creature, worm, frog, or spider it was not tolerated for an instant. Penalties were pretty sharp and frequent too. We all, the children of that generation, were brought up with something of a hard hand. I daresay it was good for us; but of this I am sure—our elders spared no pains of their own, delegated no duties; we were trained under the eye of our parents and through their companionship.

Oddly enough, the Cahirmoyle children were not made familiar with what to us were household words as much those which a Cahirmoyle sonnet chronicles—the "learned clerk crying 'Prodigious,'" or the deeds of Horatius and his comrades—I mean the literature of the Young Ireland movement, the ballads of Davis and Duffy. But one distinctively Irish element was given to their education. There was then no talk of any Gaelic League, and though Edward O'Brien, like his father, made some study of the language, no one thought of

teaching Irish to the children. But they were fully instructed in the traditional Irish dances by one of the old peasant professors of the art who wandered from house to house with his fiddle; and my aunt had the pleasure of seeing her care develop into as finished and erudite performers of every jig and reel that is danced as could be found within the four seas of Ireland.

A great element of happiness was added to her life when in 1871 my Uncle Charles married and came to take up the family agency and live at Rathgonan, the house which his brother had built for him. Between the two houses was little but the two avenues, and one huge pasture-field surrounding the home farm. It is true there was frequently a bull in the field, but a great part of the theory of education was to abolish fear of animals; and I could never conceive of Charlotte O'Brien being afraid of anything that moved on four legs—or two for that matter.

As for her brother Charles, whatever had to do with country life came kindly to him. He had not her special gift with wild animals, but he had a way with horses and dogs, and above all he had pre-eminently the genius for making himself beloved. The least intellectual of his family, he was the most loveable; and especially he was beloved by country people. It is nearly forty years since the brief period when he was an inmate of our house in Donegal, yet I know plenty who still break into enthusiasm at the mere mention of his name. Like his sisters, like his brothers, but in even fuller measure than they, he knew how to associate with the farmers and peasantry of Ireland on terms of perfect fellowship and comprehension. The country people would put it that "he was not proud"; the truth is rather that he and his trusted instinctively and implicitly that fundamental delicacy which is amongst the finest traits of our disinherited people. They know to a hairsbreadth the

area of life in which the defects of their own training make it impossible to associate on terms of equality with those of another training, and, avoiding scrupulously the ground where their own self-respect might suffer, they are grateful to those who meet them on the rest of life with the frank courtesy of comradeship. That gratitude, showing itself not only in affection, but in an added respect, was the portion through life of Charlotte O'Brien's favourite brother.

For his own kin, I know that we children found in him what we found in no one else. He was a hero to all of us and a beloved companion. It seems to me scarcely credible that there should have existed between a boy not yet in his teens and a man of six or seven and twenty so real an intimacy as that of which I have clear memory. I remember the sudden assault of grief when one of his school friends, who was my schoolmaster, told me in the spring of 1877 that he had died; and I can guess now at the cruel blank which must have been made in the life of that sister whose dearest comrade he had been always.

What I have written here sets out my impression of that special grace of nature in the tall, kindly land-agent, farmer, and sportsman which she—so much nearer to him—calls boldly

> "The Christ-love round thy head,
> Which all who knew thee bowed to."

Besides the sonnets to his memory which are printed in this book, I find two others speaking of her love for him—

> "A love born so long time ago,
> In looking back, it seems I have forgot
> The very dawn of love, nor can I know
> How I could be without it, while my life
> Is capable of thought and hope and strife."

His death in 1877 was the second great sorrow of my aunt's life; his image never faded from her heart. Yet he left behind him one who to some extent at least took his place. His marriage had been one of first youth,

and he had chosen a lady of typical northern stock—shrewd, vigorous and capable, a notable help to him in his farm. It has been the good quality of my mother's clan to assimilate what is brought into it, giving and taking of the best, and this lady, gaining her husband's power of sympathy, brought into the O'Brien stock her own helpfulness and solid common sense. She was a rock of strength to Charlotte O'Brien's emotional nature; and between these women, both so strong, yet so different in the quality of their strength, there grew up a close and lasting bond.

In 1879 came the first wrench at the heart-strings of this mother who was no mother. Dermod O'Brien, the son of the house, had already gone to school in England; now the girls went too, and for three-fourths of the year Charlotte O'Brien was thrown on her own resources. What had been only a premonition when at the age of twenty-six she wrote the sonnet "On Outliving Love," became now in truth a poignant reality. She was, for all the outward and visible signs of affection, "in loneliness of love bereft." Now, nine years older, she found herself to be the mother bird of one of her lyrics, whose fledgelings have flown, whose "nest is left empty and bare." And before that year was out, a new alliance had been formed which made the parting doubly definite.

In 1880 Edward O'Brien married for the second time, and his wife, Julia Marshall, owned a house in London, which thus constituted a new and remote centre for the Cahirmoyle household. What Charlotte O'Brien felt, her genuine rejoicing in her brother's happiness, her unconcealed pain in all that was entailed, is best told in this letter to her younger niece:—

"My own dear Mary,—

"Your letter has been such a pleasure to me I must

write you a line. I am most glad about your father's marriage, most glad he and Aunt Julia will be happy, and that you should be home again; and yet, do you know, I have felt torn to pieces in the thought of it. There's nothing in the world to me like your love for me, you children, and yet I know how easy it is for young hearts to grow away from those they are not always with. You do not know what suffering it was to me to part with you, and this is in a way the seal of our parting. It will only depend on you now, dear youngs, not to grow away from me entirely. I do not believe anyone, till you marry, will ever love you as I do. If I had been your mother your tie to me would have been a certain one. I do not believe I could have clung to it as strongly as I do now, knowing how uncertain the tie between us is. You must not let it go; you have everything before you and I have only my dogs!

From this same year of sorrowful change, 1879, dates also the most tragic and most powerful of all her poems—that on Deafness; for by this time the ever narrowing gap which let in the world's messages of sound had contracted till one's voice could scarcely force a passage. In all ways, by varying privations, she was thrown back and in on herself. Up till now, external circumstances had dictated the occupations of her existence. Now, at the age of thirty-four, she had to shape her own life.

Her little house near Mount Trenchard, overlooking that great tidal river which held for her the central and most home-like beauty of Ireland, had been built in 1870, but let periodically—often to some one of the connection. Here she went to live when she left Cahirmoyle. And since her nature abhorred the vacancy of idleness, from this time onward she was increasingly busied with

those forms of activity which brought her name before the public. Literature, as has been seen, she had early attempted: her first book, the novel "Light and Shade," was composed while she still kept house at Cahirmoyle, and was published in the autumn of 1878, just before the girls left her care.

This book is a tale of the Fenian rising of 1869, centering round the personage, so often used in fiction, of a young Irish absentee who returns for the first time to visit his estates. It is violent, even melodramatic, in incident; it lacks the power of characterisation, but it has many passages of beauty, and I am glad that it is to be republished as a serial in Dublin by the *Irish Nation*.

What gives to the book a special interest is that Charlotte O'Brien worked largely upon material gathered from the lips of men who had been actors in the Fenian rising. She made it her business and her pleasure to encourage that instinct for literary expression which is so rife among the Irish, she lent books, she encouraged those who wrote to show her their writings; and chief among her friends was Will Upton, carpenter in the neighbouring village of Ardagh, who had been a head centre in the Fenian organisation. He published under her guidance in the early eighties a little book called "Uncle Pat's Cabin," which contains much interesting matter. From him I find a letter dated Ardagh, Nov. 3, 1878, in acknowledgment of the novel. He praises her freedom, "from the sensationalism that has marked earlier writers of Irish life. . . . To depict our peasant life truly without prejudice is indeed a national good." Some criticism follows, chiefly directed to her use of dialect, and then comes the summing up:— "In a word, I think it is the sweetest told story I ever heard; it surely tells an Irish pen wrote it: may it long be guided by such reflections."

Doubtless, a too generous appreciation, coloured with gratitude, political and personal, as this goes on to show :—

"You have shown Fenianism treading its determined way, breathing noble tenderness and filled with a conscious pride in the honour of their cause. No influence could move them to dishonourable acts; all this you have faithfully traced, for which accept my thanks and the thanks of many. Yet we cannot blame your censure if our mode is condemned; we did not carry it to its end, for which thank the jealousies and disunions of our leaders. Let me tell you, honoured Madam, 'Light and Shade' I feel is a very personal compliment to me, and when the Londonderry Road is mentioned, few about here but knows who is Maurice."

That letter shows one aspect of Charlotte O'Brien's life—who her friends were, how her work impressed them; and let it be remembered that in 1878 the revival of literary activity in Ireland had not yet begun. Mr. Yeats, Lady Gregory, Miss Barlow, Shan Bullock, Moira O'Neill and the rest were not yet appearing; in the novel Lever, an admirable student of the Irish gentry, used the peasant only for comic relief; in the drama Dion Boucicault held the field almost alone. The Fenian had a right to be grateful, and many books less worthy of recognition have become popular.—Upton's praise was endorsed by a very different person, but one as loyal as he to County Limerick, and as much a part of Charlotte O'Brien's environment.

Smith O'Brien's brother, Mr. Robert O'Brien, of Old Church, was married to one of the De Veres of Curragh-chase, a family made notable by three poets. Sir Aubrey, first of the three, did not affect Charlotte O'Brien's life; but his son and heir, Sir Stephen, author of that singularly

beautiful version of the Odes of Horace, was a remarkable feature in their society; and the younger Aubrey, poet of Ireland, poet of Catholicism, interpreting Irish landscape and Irish tradition through a veil as it were of Wordsworthian tradition, was a life-long friend of his cousins, young and old. He also wrote:—

"Your book is true to a portion of the Irish character that is seldom illustrated by Irish novelists and far the noblest portion of it. You have not failed to see how incomparably the noblest part of the Irish character is that part which rests upon Faith; though if you were yourself a Catholic you would see this still more vividly and deeply. When this element in that character has been stunted by adverse circumstances, what comes out in its place is either the barbarous, where poverty and discontent prevail (as in your delineation of old Meenane), or else the conceited, the trashy, and the trivial . . .

"You have well discriminated between the generous and impulsive Fenian and the vindictive and Jacobinical Fenian; and you have also more than once pointed out that the attempted Rebellion was wrong because it was foolish, and certain to fail. But I think both in deference to truth and for the interests of our poor people, who can never be good judges as to the chances of success, all such attempts ought also to be reprobated on higher grounds than those of expediency. Obedience to a Ruler is surely a grave moral duty. The early Christians practised it under terrible persecutions (one chief *human* cause that their religion prevailed in the end), and only very desperate and *irremediable* wrongs can justify an appeal to arms and all the horrors of Civil War. This, you know, was always even O'Connell's doctrine, and had it been otherwise, in place of winning Emancipation, he might have brought us back the 'Penal Laws.' For the

last fifty years Ireland has been making steady, though not uniform, progress, and having now full constitutional rights has constitutional means of redressing whatever remains amiss. I think, therefore, loyalty is a duty which all the friends of Ireland ought now to impress most earnestly on our people. Thus only too can their future be in harmony with their past. All the interesting and memorable movements in Irish history were movements not only in favour of liberty, but of ancient and legitimate authorities also—first Irish princes and chiefs, then (when their time had gone by) of Charles and James. The '98 movement was a new thing in Ireland—an echo from the French Revolution. Our Irish people should in these matters be kept apart from all sympathy with Continental Jacobins, English Radicals, and American Levellers, or they will cease to *be Irish*."

Out of those two letters a reflection naturally arises. One of Charlotte O'Brien's closest friends in Donegal, Miss Cassandra Hill, daughter of old Lord George Hill, laboured strenuously to promote among the peasantry pleasant social life—reading, writing, dancing, and the study of their Irish tongue—but to promote only what she herself would entirely approve. She could never have been what Charlotte O'Brien was—a link between Will Upton, the Fenian, prouder of his Fenianism than of anything else, and Aubrey de Vere, the cultivated Irish Unionist, lover of his country and of his people, but opponent of their ideals.

The result appeared when a new revolution began. It drove Miss Hill and all of her kind, good kindred into despairing opposition to those whom they had loved and for whom they had laboured—those peasants of Gweedore, who in my boyhood would have drawn Lord George's old pony phaeton from the back of Errigal to his

hall door at Ballyarr. It found Charlotte O'Brien confident in her faith that justice must be done, even though the sky should fall upon herself and her own class. Her novel, published in 1878, dealt with a revolutionary movement that had spent itself, that was passing into tradition; but the factors that had produced it were operating to bring forth a new and more potent uprising—a revolution that had its birth in a period of terrible agrarian distress.

III.

Her Public Career.

Before 1880 she was not closely interested in politics. Her literary work is represented by the first volume of her verses, "A Drama and Lyrics," published in 1880, and dedicated to the memory of Charles Murrough O'Brien. The drama (more lacking in merit than any other of her writings) was recent; the lyrics reached back over many years. Two of the sonnets on Gladstone were included; and her sympathy with those who carried on the struggle for Ireland's national rights was avowed in "The Workers for Ireland."

But in truth her chief occupation of these years is represented by a bundle of letters from Professor George Rolleston, of Oxford, Natural Historian, Anthropologist and Biologist. She was taken up with bones and stones, for she always tended to dabble in scientific investigation.

But the events of 1879 and 1880 turned all thoughts

CHARLOTTE O'BRIEN WHEN SUPERINTENDENT OF THE EMIGRANTS' HOME.

(She never wore a cap, but the photographer insisted on it for dignity.)

in Ireland to very different themes. Famine was in the land: Parnell and Davitt had raised the banner of the Land League: trouble began to be so rife that Edward O'Brien abandoned his project of taking his newly-made bride to travel on the Continent, and came home to look after his own people.

What Charlotte O'Brien was thinking in those days may be clearly inferred from the article entitled "The Irish Poor Man,"* which was given the place of honour in the *Nineteenth Century* for December, 1880 (an article which suggests vividly what has been accomplished, what left undone in these thirty years), and her other paper, "Eighty Years," published in March, 1881, by the same Review. Her first conclusion, that Home Rule "in its ordinary meaning" was impossible, was soon abandoned. She became a thick and thin supporter of Parnell. I find a letter written in December, 1885, expounding to her niece Mary the orthodox doctrine of a parliament for Ireland, retaining the rule of the Crown. "I, for one, am less of a Separatist than I was before the Land League started, and I feel sure many would say the same."

Now, in the spring of 1881, she was fiercely excited, very angry with the Liberal Government, and busy writing letters to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, then edited by Mr. John Morley.

Her attitude upon what she frankly called the "organised revolution" of these years is well illustrated by letters to her sister-in-law's sister, the Hon. Alice

* Her main intention is thus indicated in a resolution drafted by her—"That the first need of life to the agricultural labourer is a plot of ground and decent house held from neither farmer nor landlord. This will ensure him a free market for his labour, without which wages cannot rise. We therefore call upon the Government to buy up suitable plots of land, provide houses, and relet them at a fair rent on a secure tenure."

Spring Rice, a close and dear friend, but, like almost all her kindred, at variance with her on this great issue. The stand she took is the more notable because life had brought her into touch with none but the best landlords. Sir Stephen de Vere, living the life of a recluse on Foynes Island, was indulgent to a fault with his tenantry; her brother Edward, his brother-in-law, Lord Monteagle, were not merely just and moderate men—Liberals of the 1870 type—but active in promoting schemes for the welfare of their countryside, eager to create employment. In a class war she took the side of her nation against the interest and the judgment of those nearest to her, those whom she had the best right to respect. No doubt she followed an impulse that lay deeper than reason; but all the prepossessions which affect ordinary minds were pulling her the other way, and this fact lends a special significance to her views. It is to the honour of those about her, as well as to her own, that so deep a divergence on matters of such flaming controversy should have led to no breach of friendship, no slackening of affection.

The pull both ways is felt in her correspondence: for she was indignant that Lord Monteagle's tenants should turn against him, and the letter which I quote first refers to this.

"I get rather wild about politics, it is so hard to get things straight in one's head.—The landlords with their outcry of robbery, put against the doings of landlordism—the people with their failure of right, put against the just treatment they have received from some: the labourers suffering, pitched out by both parties, though offending neither, and too stupid to combine. My prevailing feeling, though, is indignation against those who want to leave their country in the lurch because she is in

difficulties; only they take the money with them. I could find it in my heart to say, 'Go, and let better men fill your place.' Anyhow, rich or poor, right or wrong, I'll stick by Ireland."

That was written on January 16th, 1881. Very soon her feeling drove her to a decisive step, and she published a letter in the *Munster News*, which I have not before me, but which evidently denounced the amazing Coercion Act that had then been passed by the Liberal Government before the great Land Bill of that year had seen the light. She writes (Jan. 27th) :—

"I can't think why I have faced all the wrath I shall meet, except that it has been fretting in my soul for so long, and I got so angry at what I think the injustice of the attacks on the people, I could hold in no longer. I am horrified too by the injustice of making the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* retrospective. Owing to the dilatoriness, the slackness, the weakness of Mr. Forster's use of the ordinary law for six months or more, the liberty of the country was allowed to degenerate into licence, and now those who were allowed to do then exactly as they liked are to be subject to arrest arbitrarily for eighteen months."

She wrote in the same month to Lord Monteagle :— "The people don't know yet what is coming, and are as ready as possible to quiet down; but once they see coercion used as an instrument of eviction, I think you landlords will have a country full of tigers to deal with. I don't see how Government can avoid making the power of summary arrest an instrument of the landlords, and then the people will think nothing but murder can save them in their homes. . . . Everything is quiet as

possible here (Foynes) now, for everyone is depending on the faith that the Government are going to do something to secure them and to give them arbitration of rents. Instead of that, they'll hear of evictions and arrests long before they see the bill for reform. How is it Government can't see that Parnell knows the country, and can foresee for it, and is a man to be consulted, not treated as an enemy? I suppose they are afraid of an outcry if they dared to listen to the opinion of the man who represents the people of Ireland, as surely he does."

By the middle of February she was ready to plunge almost physically into the fray. I print her letter in full:—

"ARDANOIR, 17*th February*, 1881.

"You see the Roman Catholic bishops have publicly asked a blessing on the 'great struggle' in which the people are engaged. I fear greatly though that this Coercion Bill will bring up again into life all the bad side of the agitation which has passed away so much lately. Everything I hear from men like M—— and all our own people, and others I don't know who have written to me, and what I see in the papers, makes me daily stronger in the belief that the evils of the League were pure excrescences and the natural inevitable outcome of the sudden idea of delivery from a serfdom of centuries. For anything that comes now I shall hold the Government wholly to blame in exasperating the people by this dreadful Coercion Act. M—— says there never was a truer word than that the present quiet is not the outcome of coercion, but of the people having come to their senses, and having set their faces against outrage. I hear only that Parnell's party is omnipotent now. I am very glad now I did write that letter—any doubts I had then have since passed away. I believe everyone who justifies

the right half of the Land Leagueism weakens the wrong half, and if I could in my person represent all the liberal landlords of the country, I would say now to the people, Come and let us talk the matter over, your men and our men, and let us not have this coercion putting bad blood between us for the benefit of spies and informers.—'All the people want is justice.' Over and over this is said to me. Whether the Government succeed in producing a temporary lull remains to be seen, but that they have strengthened the Parnellites immensely I have not the smallest doubt. I have not seen Monteagle's paper, but the review in the *Freeman* leads me to think he is fighting an excrescence, a cry, not the real thing. I hope to see his paper before long.

"My feelings about all this matter are very strong, and I have always held that if one could clearly see one's way in a great political question, it is not right to hold back. Now the men will probably be imprisoned, it may be all the more necessary the women should come forward.

"I am working away steadily at the *Pall Mall*. I only seldom write publicly, but often privately, to Mr. Morley, just telling him as far as I can judge of the state of feeling. He put a piece of one of my letters straight into one of his leading articles, and I think I may help a little towards showing how what is going on in London is reflected in Ireland. I generally hear here the very opposite of what you might judge from the newspapers, except the *Freeman*, which I think really reflects the thought of the country people, though, of course, it forms their thought too. I enclose a scrap. I believe this is a sign my article on the labourers came *à propos*. The priests have taken it up. It is also a sign of one of the things in which I see the great good the League has done. It has so raised men to consider interests outside their own families.

M—— says, if there never were a Land Bill the country would never again be as it was before—injustice, over-reaching, land grabbing, usury, and ill-treatment of the poor are now condemned by the awakened public spirit, headed by priests and bishops. And to drive back Ireland under these vices of slavery, the Government are now about to use all their power. I never will believe again in any public man from England as regards Ireland, never, be he Mr. Greatheart, or Gladstone, or Bright, or anyone. They are good upright men, and understand England, but they do not understand Ireland."

What is hinted here is put explicitly in another letter of 1882 :—

" —— is very fierce against the Ladies' Land League. Well, the fates led me to the emigration instead, otherwise I should have probably joined it, as I sympathised with it. —— will be glad to hear I lost £8 to-day through the means of it, having to accept my mortgage interest short (owing to the no-rent agitation). I am not less the land leaguer though, and I had the honour of shaking hands with Michael Davitt the other day, and had the opportunity of admiring his fine, true, honest bright face. Well, we have all our different ways of looking at things."

Happily, the work which she found to do was work in which all sympathised who loved her—nationalist and unionist, landlord and tenant. I have now to describe the main public activity of her life.

The sudden pinch of distress, which had brought the political trouble to a head, produced another effect in a new stimulation of that awful flux which has been the symptom

of Ireland's deadly disease ever since the great famine. We have the statistics from 1852 onwards, showing in many years a loss equal to the natural loss by death in a healthy community. From 1875 to 1879 there was marked improvement; the percentage had fallen to a figure, shocking indeed, but still no worse, proportionately, than it is to-day. In 1879, forty-seven thousand people left Ireland—8.9 per 1,000 of the population. In 1880 the total leapt to ninety-five thousand—18 per 1,000, a percentage higher than the death-rate of London.

Charlotte O'Brien's love for her country and her race was the deepest thing in her. It had found expression so far back as 1870 in that very moving sonnet, "I dwell among my own People." And earlier still I find verses (not reproduced here), called "The Exile," which tell of the emigrant's loneliness and homeward yearning. She knew that in such a time as this of the early eighties, when the stream was not a slow drainage, but a tumultuous rush, the Irish emigrants, "her own people," fled as men might from a city of the plague; they went unprepared, weak, defenceless, hampering each other, the prey of many horrors, rushing into peril most obvious, least avoidable, for the women and girls. She had read, years before, J. F. McGuire's book, "The Irish in America," and the remembrance of it filled her with fear. "I was deeply impressed by his account of the ships, and it took hold of my mind, *that* was to be my work," she says in a summarised account, written on Feb. 15, 1908, to be read at the Silver Jubilee of the American Mission for the Protection of Irish Immigrant Girls.

Chance lent her a helper, a point to begin from. Her sister-in-law and dear friend, the widow of Charles O'Brien, had married again, and was living at Queenstown with her husband, Mr. Dickson, then an officer in the

Royal Irish Constabulary. She went to stay with the Dicksons in March, 1881. Spring is the period when the annual exodus is greatest: the store of potatoes is giving out, the opening year gives more hope of work in America. It was arranged that she should visit one of the ships in company with the Dicksons and Captain Wilson, a Board of Trade Inspector. The letter which I have quoted goes on:—

"The ship happened to be the *Germanic* (White Star Line), not a bit worse, I am sure, than any other ship, but I was not prepared for the way I saw all sexes and ages huddled together, &c., &c. Well, I got into the fight; tumbled into it, I may say."

She did, indeed. On May 6, 1881, the *Pall Mall Gazette* published an article describing her impressions—as powerful a piece of journalism as anyone could read. Immediately questions were asked in Parliament, Mr. Frank Hugh O'Donnell leading. The matter was very grave, and Mr. Chamberlain, then at the Board of Trade, promised an enquiry. Captain Wilson met her again, went over some ten ships with her, and it must have been apparent to her at once that she had, through inaccurate observation, gravely misstated facts. Yet she insisted, and rightly, that fundamentally her protest had been justified: that the arrangements were very scant of decency, and absolutely lacking in proper protection for the troops of young women who were streaming across, inexperienced in travel and in life. Her memorandum, published in the Board of Trade Blue Book, and based this time on no superficial impression, makes perfectly plain the very undesirable possibilities which the private enquiries among emigrants that she was pushing ceaselessly proved to be only too real.

But at the same time, with characteristic indiscretion,

she did things which must have infuriated her champions. She wrote a letter to the Board of Trade declaring that a second visit to the *Germanic* showed her arrangements whose perfection and beauty she could not reconcile with her previous recollection; and she omitted to stress Captain Wilson's evidence that these arrangements were constantly altered from voyage to voyage on emigrant ships. But she did worse. She wrote to Mr. Forster, then Chief Secretary, saying that this letter of retractation must be taken as meaning nothing. Naturally Mr. Chamberlain, in the House of Commons, made play with these two documents, and when the Blue Book appeared, newspapers were in full cry of condemnation over her reckless and inconsequent assertions.

A weaker woman would not have survived that flood of ridicule; but her constitutional disregard of public opinion stood well to her, showing itself here in a great strength and sanity, as at other times in quaint eccentricities. She wrote to Father O'Kennedy, then a newly-made friend:—

"I must tell you of my downfall. The White Star Line was true about the beds being divided, and I was not; that is the answer of the emigrant girls" (to whom she had writen for testimony). "But at the same time they confirm the main question—that 142 men, women (married and single) and children were in the same room. I am apologising to the Line publicly. I can't but feel glad that in one way it makes a great clearance of a cloud of falsehood. That is good."

Mrs. Dickson, her closest friend and associate in the years of this work, writes me her account of its inception:—

"As regards the beginning of her work in Queenstown, it happened in quite an unpremeditated way. She was

staying with us, and expressed a desire to go over one of the Atlantic Liners. It was the sailing day of the White Star ship *Germanic*, and Willie, she and I went out in the tender and went on board, and were shown over the ship by the officer. We went all through the steerage, and while we talked she spent her time observing all the different arrangements as to berthing, &c. The berths were all canvas and movable. She made no remark about anything, and we returned home. I noticed she was silent and absorbed in something for the rest of the evening, and she said to me—did I notice certain things about the berthing? Some of them I had noticed, some not, as she had given me no idea of what she was thinking of, and then the matter ended, and we heard no more for some weeks when an official from the Board of Trade called on us to say a letter had appeared in the *Pall Mall* making very serious charges against the White Star Liner, dated from our house. I wired for Charlotte to come to Queenstown to meet this man, and she came. Of course she could only assert things were as she had seen, but thought by waiting and going on board the *Germanic* on her return journey she could point out all she had seen to the Board of Trade man. But she had not taken into account that the steerage part of the vessel is changed in New York, and quite different arrangements made, so that when we went out expecting to see things as they had been, all was changed This was what put her in the wrong at the first, and left her so open to attack. No one can know what she suffered and went through during those years of the emigration work."

Somewhat of that suffering is disclosed—though with a noble reticence—in this letter to Miss Alice Spring Rice:—

"*26th June*, 1881.

"I have had a very 'rough' time of it, it must be

owned, but I have got the thing well afloat now, both as a parliamentary battle and as to the Catholic Church. They are all astir now. Archbishop Croke, one of the most powerful men in Ireland, has promised me every aid. The 'Nun of Kenmare' is working hard, both in America and in Ireland. The priests are thoroughly awake to the part they must take, and in Parliament I am not now alone, but have many champions, who are all ready to take the work off my shoulders as soon as possible. Like other reformers, I had the unpopular part to bear and the hardest blows, but I have now plenty of proof of the necessity of reform, and am not standing alone. I have an immensity of writing to do also. I sent off 20 letters yesterday, besides any number of copies of pamphlets. But the fact is my not writing to you or anyone else has come more from a shrinking from putting myself in the way of friendly stabs one is apt to get from relations if one has a doubtful cause. Not that I feared them from you—you never stabbed me yet—but I got plenty, and I feared more, and that made me feel hunted. But all through I knew that the work had been given me to do, and that anything I might be suffering was only a necessary part. It is long years ago, before I ever saw an emigrant ship, that I have felt some work lay there for me, only I did not think of it in this form, but rather in the way of organising a body of matrons, or something that way; but my deafness turned me from that, but still I kept the thought in my head, and then when I was led up to this it has strengthened me greatly to feel I was only a tool in God's hands. Don't believe them when they tell you there is no Providence. I have been led up to this, and it has been put into my hands to do—not this time alone in my life either. I can say clearly that though I have had a hard fight and a very painful one, I have had a strong hand guiding all through, so

that I never have feared for my ultimate success—I knew that the fulness of the time was come. How easily all might have been otherwise. I might have gone on board one of the decenter ships, or even seen that ship in its show dress and not have fully seen the evil. Instead of that I saw it in its most hideous form almost. Then, if I had not made the mistake of sending to *Pall Mall* I might have convicted that ship, but I should never have seen the others and learned that the evil was only a bad form of a hideous system. The very wounds I have had have all been working to drive me on. I am quite satisfied now, though I fear Mr. Chamberlain has put himself into the hands of the officials against me. But difficulties like these will only make a more complete rooting up of the matter necessary. . . . Mr. Arthur Moore, M.P., is my Parliamentary champion. He says to-day:—'If we are men our policy must be to keep you in the background, and not give the impertinent officialism of the country the opportunity of slighting you.' I can tell you I have had a good taste of that same impertinent officialism, and am delighted to hand over all of it to the men."

She had champions, too, out of Parliament, and staunch ones. Father O'Kennedy, who was busily engaged in the quest for corroborative evidence, wrote to Mrs. Dickson on June 3rd, 1881:—

"Really when I read the Parliamentary Report of Tuesday's *Freeman*, I hardly knew what I was doing. I was lying on the grass, and when I saw the heading I at once turned to and read it, but I felt as if I were stung. That passage of Mr. Chamberlain's where he said 'he did not know what to think of a lady writing sensational letters, &c.'—that was the worst of all—that and the laughter."

A little further on in the same letter comes this significant passage :—

"I must say I did not think Miss O'Brien was acting too precipitately. It was, I suppose, her own hot interest—but, mind you, there is a share of the 'leave-me-to-myself' in her composition, and I am reminded of Davis' words (in the poem on Clare's Dragoons)—

> 'Our Colonel comes of Brian's race :
> His wounds are on his breast and face :
> The Gap of Danger is his place. '

That shows not only the personal magnetism which she exercised, but also the unfailing magic of her name. To her countrymen, of whom this priest was a fine representative, Charlotte O'Brien stood not for herself alone : they saw in her one who caught up the standard from a long and glorious line."

Meanwhile Father O'Kennedy was assisting in the tentative projects which she conceived before her action took its final shape. He writes in a memorial notice published in the *Ave Maria*, of Indiana, July, 1909 :—

"Her first intention was—she an Irish Protestant—to establish a body of Catholic Ocean Nuns. I knew her to interview bishops and urge them to found such an Order ; I was with her. Failing in that, her next project was to have a priest as chaplain on board each of the emigrant liners. She was a Protestant still, but she knew the priest's influence with his people. She pointed that out to the managers of the companies, insisted on its beneficial effects, drew out a scheme of payment (sixpence a head for each emigrant), asserted that Irish emigrants would gladly pay an additional sixpence to go on a vessel that had a priest, and declared that the names of all such vessels should be advertised in Ireland and America."

She had other and more high-placed helpers, though none more devoted. Archbishop Croke wrote from Cashel on June 30 that he would put her proposals before his clergy.

"God will, I am sure," he added, "give you a high place in Heaven for all the good you are striving to do. I hope to be able to second your efforts."

And from the Archbishop's House at Westminster came this characteristic expression of Cardinal Manning's view :—

"All that I can do shall be done . . . I am very glad you persevere in defiance of contradiction. No good ever escaped it, or was done without it."

Yet in the end, nothing came of all this but sympathy and re-established confidence.

"Then I realised," she says, in her own account which I have already quoted, "I could do nothing unless I seized the ropes into my own hands. This I knew was possible owing to the confidence of the Irish people in my father's name, William Smith O'Brien. I took a large house in Queenstown, and had myself registered as an ordinary lodginghouse keeper, licensed for 105 lodgers, and then the play began in earnest. The Board of Trade and the Ship Companies, my first foes, when they saw I was in real earnest, determined upon improving the condition of things in Queenstown, helped me all they could.

"I visited the ships along with a medical officer day after day, often beginning at six o'clock in the morning and going through three or four ships. In the meantime

more or less of my 105 lodgers had to be looked after in the house. It was a rough life. I had not even a bedroom, but slept in my sittingroom. Having been at the work more than a year, I saw clearly that no permanent good could be done in Ireland; and that New York was to be my next point. The White Star Line took me over free of cost in the autumn of 1882. When I arrived, instead of going to a hotel or fashionable boardinghouse, I took a room in a tenement house in Washington Street. I spent some time there with a porter, a longshoreman, and their wives. A month spent in New York gave me a full insight into the lives of the Irish emigrants and the fate of the innumerable unprotected girls who were swarming through my own hands in Queenstown.

"Talking to my friends, they said to me:—'Bishop Ireland is your man; go and see him.' So I went to see him. I was fully primed and knew my question down to the ground, the people at home, Queenstown, Liverpool, and New York. Before I left, the Bishop put his hand in mine and said:—'You need not fear, Miss O'Brien, I will not let this matter drop.' For I had said to him, 'I am only the plank over the stream; it is you, the Catholic Church, who have to build the bridge. I can do nothing more, and I am a Protestant. This part of the work is yours, not mine,' and thus I gave it into his hands."

"That part of the work"—the care of the emigrants when they landed—was not neglected. She had been well directed. Speaking of her interview with Archbishop Ireland, she said to Father O'Kennedy—"I met an apostle." * He used his influence with Cardinal McCloskey,

* She corresponded with Archbishop Ireland to the end of her life; intermittently, but with constant cordiality; she never forgot friends, nor was forgotten by them.

then head of the Catholics in America, and as a result Father O'Riordan, "the most popular young priest in the Archdiocese, was appointed Chaplain of Castle Garden, the State Office where emigrants are received." In 1883 the mission of our Lady of the Rosary began its career.

The other part of the work—the reform of arrangements for steerage passengers—was also accomplished. Here is the account which she gave to an American interviewer in the course of that visit, telling the results of her year's agitation :—

"I tried very hard to get the Catholic clergy to establish some institution in Queenstown for the care of emigrant women, but I failed. I knew that a considerable improvement had resulted from the agitation of the matter, but I feared all would fall through if I did not take some further step. Therefore I decided to leave my own home and become a licensed lodginghouse keeper in Queenstown. When this step became known, all the steamship companies saw at once that it gave me a great power over the Irish traffic, and I suppose the White Star people thought that if I settled myself there as their enemy it might prove very serious to them. Father Nugent brought about a meeting between me and Mr. Ismay, the real owner of the line, who took me on his ships and gave me a chance to understand the real points on which we had been at variance.

"About three thousand people passed through my lodging-house this year, but when I came to America I determined to close it altogether and to re-open it on my return. I established the house partly because there was great need of such a place and partly because I knew it would give me a direct and strong influence over all the Queenstown steamship lines. I knew I

could force almost any reform I wanted if I put myself directly in relationship with the emigrants. I did not attempt to influence their choice of lines, but to any who spoke to me I expressed myself openly. I was most anxious not to injure any line, but to work upon, write to, and visit the heads of the companies, and urge strongly what reforms I thought were needed. I went over eleven ships in May, 1881, with the Board of Trade officer, and then none until January, 1882, since which time I have seen them all constantly. I have paid them over one hundred visits this year. I have visited every nook and corner of them. I have had frequent letters from emigrants describing the treatment they received, and also a number of emigrants passing through my hands returning from America. Thus I have gained as thorough a knowledge of the subject as I could obtain.

"And what has been the result? When I first took the matter in hand it was a common thing for single women and married people to berth in the same rooms together, sometimes in the same tiers of beds. The companies professed to separate them, but the girls who came with parents slept with them and other married couples. Now this is all done away with on all the lines. The single women are always quite separate from every other class. Various arrangements are made. The National line puts the single women on one side and the married people on the other in what are called enclosed berths—small, separate rooms, accommodating twenty persons each. Up the centre of the compartment is run a lath partition, effectually dividing the compartment into two, with separate entrances and means of access to the decks. The Guion line has recently introduced the same system. It is not thoroughly introduced, but the work is under way. The Inman line, as a rule, has its girls separate, but as the number

of passengers varies, so do the arrangements. The Cunarders are behind all of the other lines, because, though they have enclosed berths, they are for all classes, and all open into one compartment. Theirs are the only steerages so arranged. The Allan line has a different system. For twenty-five years they have viewed with a condemnation equal to mine the systems I complain of, and have separated the men from the women altogether at night on their ships. The American line, so far as I have seen, berths its single women in compartments by themselves.

"I think we have gained several points," she continued, "one, that single men are almost always berthed, as the English law originally intended, in compartments bulkheaded away from the other sections. The single women are, as a rule, berthed in a compartment entirely by themselves, but in some cases the enclosed berths open into the same compartment into which those of the married people open. There are now stewardesses on all emigrant ships. The Cunard had formerly none. The Inman had them on some ships and not on others. I have known of 400 or 500 women on a vessel with no woman in charge. Improvement in this respect is still needed. One Inman vessel on one trip carried about 1,000 steerage passengers and had only one steerage stewardess. As to lavatories and sanitary arrangements, the Board of Trade, after my letters, and what was brought out in Parliament, took action, and there has been a great improvement in this respect, and in the addition of a number of staircases and entrances, so as to give separate access to the different classes of steerage passengers. In my opinion all sanitary arrangements ought to be, as they are in the White Star vessels, so arranged that there shall be no excuse for the women to leave their steerage at night. This is not attainable in many of

the old vessels, but in all new built ships I have no doubt it will be studied and brought forward. As Mr. Rogers said in his letter to the *Sun*, the White Star Line has given the married people separate private rooms, while the lavatories are provided on this and other lines with soap, washbowls, and towels. This is a step beyond even my anticipation. I should like to see them provide the bedding and utensils that constitute a steerage outfit, but the fact is that no member of the Conference lines can take any step of that kind unless all do it together. Mirrors are permitted, because there were no Conference rules against them. Nobody ever thought of such a thing being done or dreamed of as the provision of towels and bowls, to enable steerage folks to wash.

" One of my objects in coming to America was to bring the competition of improvement affecting English lines to bear upon the foreign companies, because while the foreign traffic is far behind the English, there remains a much larger margin for the English lines to fall back upon than if we could force the whole traffic up.

"You already are aware that in the improvements introduced during the last few months on the White Star line I see the emigrant ship of the future, but I am fully conscious that such radical changes cannot be brought about over the whole emigrant fleet in a moment. Many of the older vessels could not be so remodelled except at great expense. We must, therefore, while doing justice to the line which has introduced the best model ships yet crossing the Atlantic, equally do justice to the very great improvements lately introduced on the whole English trade. With regard to the five great lines which I have visited at Queenstown this year, and on which I have frequently examined the steerage accommodation, I can speak confidently—*i.e.*, Inman, Guion, National, Cunard, and Allan.

" ' Did you ever travel as a steerage passenger ? '

" ' Yes, twice from Queenstown to Liverpool. I should not have the slightest objection now to travel in that way. I asked to be allowed to on this last trip, but they would not permit me to. I wanted to find out about the ventilation. I was told that nothing could be more horrible than the experiences in the steerage a few years ago. Now those who travelled then and have since recrossed the ocean say they were treated well, and were very comfortable.'

" ' You were speaking of the objects of your visit to America.'

" ' Yes. First, I wanted to find out what was being done in Castle Garden; secondly, I wanted to see the condition of the lodging-houses, and how far Castle Garden went toward solving the boarding-house question ; third, I wanted to see the life of the Irish emigrant when settled in America—in the West, and here in the tenement houses; fourth, I wanted to draw attention to this reform in the manner of berthing married people in order to hasten its extension to other lines; fifth, I was anxious to call the attention of foreigners to the question in order that the improvements introduced in English lines should be extended to the foreign traffic; sixth, I wanted to find out if it lay in my power to start any work for the improvement of the lodging-houses here and for the protection of immigrant women; seventh, to try to supply the want of direct communication on the emigrant question between the two sides of the Atlantic. This last want I have felt extremely, Though for the last two years I have given my attention to no other subject, I have been unable to get correct information. Though the fact that a steamship line may be acting badly be published here, the fact is not certain to be communicated to the other side. If there

were any system of intercommunication, such things as have gone on in certain vessels even within the last year would be things of the past altogether. I have working with me Mr. Moore, Member for Clonmel; Mr. Frank Hugh O'Donnell, and virtually the whole Irish Party, so that practically any point I want to bring to public notice I can bring forward under privilege of Parliament.' "

She returned from America in the end of 1882 to re-open the Queenstown Home, and it existed for another year. The work was done, however. I must tell now, as it were from the inside, the story of that work—how it moved her, how it coloured her personal life, how she felt what she was doing—in a word, what her own life was in these years.

Here is a letter to the younger of her daughters by adoption, dated June 15, 1881, from her home at Ardanoir :—

" Dearest Mary,

" To think that your birthday passed without a letter from me—but you must forgive me, for I have been writing morning and night, heartsore and tired, fighting for these poor young girls, many not older than yourself, who are going away into unspeakable dangers. So you must forgive me, dear, dear children. When I think of those who love their children as I love you, and then think of what I now know, it breaks my heart; but I am very hopeful of being able to do good and reform matters very much, if not altogether. Uncle Monteagle is here now, and he is going back to London fully prepared to carry on the fight there. It won't be necessary for me to go, for Mr. Chamberlain is receiving my evidence from here. I will send to your father in a few days a

letter printed for private circulation on the subject. Did any of you see a paper of mine in the *Fortnightly Review* of this month? It is on emigration, but not on this branch of the subject. . . I am so haunted with this nightmare I can think of nothing but it."

Later in the year (November, 1881), after she had failed in her efforts to set others to work, she wrote:—

"I think of making a further move now and trying to establish a depôt for single emigrant girls here. This would entail my leaving Ardanoir for the time, and I wish I could see my way to letting it, but fear I shan't. If I could get it even inhabited and the expenses off my shoulders it would be a good thing. I am asking to find if I can get a committee of gentlemen to get the thing afoot and money. In any case I think I shall make the attempt out of my own means—as it ought to be self-supporting, the emigrants paying as to the common lodging-houses. It is horrid to think of leaving Ardanoir; but I see well nothing will be done unless I do it, and I might be able to do great good."

What helped her greatly in her work was her gift for making friends. In January, 1882, she wrote:—

"I was in Liverpool a few days ago and made acquaintance with Father Nugent and Mr. Ismay, of the White Star Line. They are both very good and nice. I have seen the *Germanic* again in dock. When there dismantled, it became more easy to see where I was right and where wrong. I believe that it will be possible to get on good terms with White Star, as I shall give them as full a withdrawal as I possibly can."

The letter goes on to deal with money matters. Nothing

but a frugality which bordered on asceticism could have made it possible for her to provide as she did, mainly out of her own means, for this campaign.

"There are so many expenses, especially travelling; going to Liverpool for a few (two) days cost me about £3, and yet I find I always gain the value in knowledge and experience. I want, for the same reason, to go to London in order to get into personal communication with the Women's Emigration Society, to see Australian ships, &c. My head gets so desperately full of this question I can think of nothing else. I believe there can be no doubt that I have now in my hands a very considerable power, and if I carry out my plan of going to America this autumn, that power will probably be greatly increased."

Here in June, 1882, is an even more humane appreciation of those whom she was attacking:—

"Meanwhile we continue persecuting the Lines. Poor dears! they have had a fearfully hard hit from America; all the bad stories of the last twenty years have been raked up against them, debated in Congress, and printed. I am sure they have all been bitterly discomforted, but their troubles have made me relent, as it is too hard to make them responsible for all the wrong that may go on among thousands of people: and so many of them are such nice people. I went to Liverpool (a second visit), mainly to make friends with Mr. ——. You may remember how fierce I have been against them all the spring; well, having made them evidently in a fright, I thought I'd go and see if anything could be done through the heads. I found Mr. ——, a fine-looking, strong-faced young man, just come into

the work. The question is, will he be able to pull up the Line. I am hopeful of him anyhow. We had a very friendly meeting after all."

Here, now, is her account of one of the crossings from Liverpool to Queenstown—about twenty-four hours—on which she travelled as a steerage passenger :—

"Dearest Children,—

"I am all right after my voyage, which I enjoyed notwithstanding all the hardships. Tell Uncle Monteagle that I have a new point for him to fight on in the need to have the law revised. There were four horses berthed among us! It appears it is legal to berth up to ten, but these were not quite legally arranged. Captain Wilson made a great fuss about them, though they had been cleared by the officer in Liverpool. Altogether, Captain Wilson was inclined to refuse to clear the ship; the hospital accommodation was so bad, and ventilation, but it had passed the Liverpool officers without comment. I shall have a deal to tell Uncle Monteagle of my experiences. Whenever I woke in the night there was an old woman in the next berth working away at the whiskey bottle (not an Irishwoman). I had the advantage of an empty berth on each side of me, but below and opposite were a lot of women and children. It was all awfully dirty and disgusting and the food bad enough, but, on the other hand, the people were so friendly, so good to one another, so cheery, I was happy enough: and in the morning we had a really beautiful scene. The day was exquisite—bright sun, still sea—so the people were quite happy again. Some Baptists began singing hymns, and shortly all the emigrants were gathered together, and we spent the whole morning thus. I made friends especially with one young man, a Baptist,

a coal miner, black and grimy, but I believe the man to be a true apostle. I have seldom come across anyone who seemed to me so transformed by Christianity, truly a beautiful and grand character under a very rough outside. I was talking a long time to him. There were also a married man and wife, Baptists, Bradford factory workers, very attractive, but the miner was a man of more depth I think, just the hero for George Eliot. He is to write to me and tell me of his life in the mines in America. He has a quantity of books and hymns, and is evidently the stuff to make a missionary of. It would have repaid a great deal more miserable living to have realised, even for a few hours, the life of such a man, silently working among the poor, one of themselves, but raised so far above them by principle. I saw a share of the bad side, too, and I ascertained one very important fact—that is, though there were a great many children, they were hardly any trouble, but went to sleep at once, and were not at all sick, though the men and women were so, desperately."

Here, also, is a letter to her elder niece, giving her impressions of America :—

"MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA,
October 9, 1882.

"DEAREST NELL,—

"Far away you see, about my furthest point. I am very much taken with this country, it is so wonderfully more congenial than I had expected—everything more home-like looking, and much prettier too. The fact is the whole country, as far as I have seen, has a great deal of quiet loveliness, no striking or impressive scenery, but beauty of foreground almost greater than any country I know, except Switzerland. Of course the autumn is the time to see America, for the colouring is more

exquisite than you can conceive in the woods. If you took your paint-box with absolutely pure new paints and gradated every shade from pale canary down to the deepest browns in madder, you would get some idea of the colouring. It is simply unbelievable. You see on one side of you a tree of pure lake, mixing its branches with one of gold, and side by side with another of rich orange above shading into scarlet. The Virginian creeper, like our ivy, twines round every tree and in grand masses over the ground, and you have acres of sumach in the swampy places of pure blood red. It is magnificent, the country is not half as lonely looking withal as I expected. The New England States are like a succession of beautiful English parks, the natural woods and cultivated lands alternating as in park scenery, and up and down rolling land beautifully shaped, but all in soft masses, nothing approaching to mountain scenery. Out away West here, however, the scenery becomes more Irish. The views open and the highlands are more marked, the foregrounds, though still beautiful, are not quite so rich as in the East, and the distances are finer. St. Paul's might very easily be in Co. Limerick, but the stone is nowhere visible as at home. The land out West here looks much richer than nearer New York. I need not have worried about expenses as far as I can see. Hitherto I have been so handed on that I have spent about fifteen dollars since I left England. The railways give me passes, and people pay all for me and won't hear to the contrary. I was at Mr. A. M. Sullivan's lecture on Saturday. Curiously, he, Father Nugent, Bishop Ireland and I had met in this far-away corner. Father Nugent introduced me to the two or three thousand people in the Hall. The next day's papers say the applause was 'terrific.' Anyhow, I have got my hold pretty tight now in this country; the

Lines will know that the inevitable fact has a pretty extensive royalty. I have been speaking my candid opinion of the poor dears in a way that will hardly secure a welcome in Liverpool from some of them. I hope it will teach the backsliders to come up to mark. I send you a sonnet you may like to see. You know Americans don't speak of 'autumn' but 'fall.' I shall make you laugh plenty when I get home, but I am now going out driving with a Mr. Kelly, a very pleasing and gentlemanlike person, though a grocer. Everyone in this country is in business. I wish many of our landed gentry were as gentlemanlike as these business men. Bishop Ireland is magnificent, so is his sister, mother of this convent. Such a lark! I got the sisters off singing 'Tramp, Tramp, Tramp the Boys are Marching,' yesterday, Sunday, and as excited as any batch of pure-blooded Fenians."

None of her letters tell of the sharp struggle which she had to face in Queenstown itself when she actually started. A grave part of the evils which she undertook to remedy occurred there: the unfortunate people, disgorged from the trains and compelled to wait a day or days for their boat, were often mercilessly fleeced. The keepers of the lodginghouses resented this new competition, this interference with their trade; and when she and her man John went down to the station to meet arrivals they were hustled violently and threatened with worse. She described to me a perfect pandemonium, poor creatures from the wilds of Kerry or Connaught emerging like cattle from the crowded carriages, sick with hunger or fatigue, stupefied with grief; and then the mob of lodginghouse runners seizing them, dragging them this way and that, with noisy exhortations.

Thus she began her work of love in a turmoil of mean and jealous hatred, bullied and browbeaten.

And, as so often happens in Irish affairs, even she did not escape suspicion. The drain of emigration grew worse: it was in the heart of the agrarian war, peasants lost confidence, believed that the Land League would fail, lost hope, and rushed away; and in the thick of it the Government did what I believe no other civilised Government has ever done: it began to pay its subjects to go abroad. Lord Derby, at Manchester on December 13, 1882, after deprecating that creation of peasant proprietary by State-aided purchase which was advocated from the first by Parnell, and which after a generation of demoralising agitation and more demoralising legislation, has been with universal consent adopted as the sane solution, said that there was another remedy which he did believe in. "Personally I believe that some millions spent in promoting Irish emigration, if Parliament and the Cabinet saw their way to it, would pay us well."

Private philanthropists were already busy: one boasted of having enabled fifty thousand persons to emigrate. Now, Government acted on Lord Derby's suggestion, and offered a grant of five pounds to each Irish family willing to leave Ireland for the United States.

This action called forth fierce indignation in America. On January 23rd, 1883, the best of the friends whom Charlotte O'Brien had made in America, John Boyle O'Reilly, the exiled Fenian, poet, novelist, journalist, wrote to her from the rooms of his paper, *The Boston Pilot*:—

"Since you were here the whole face of affairs has changed, and I have changed with it. The plan of 'assisted emigration' proposed by the Government has called out a more indignant spirit of opposition and protest than I have ever seen among the Irish in America. Mr. Vere Foster and Major Gaskell have been here

arranging for the reception of immigrants sent by the Government. We have refused to co-operate with them in any way. The Charitable Irish Society, which you addressed, had appointed a committee to consider your proposition, and they meant to report favourably on it. Instead, they have passed a resolution of emphatic protest against the proposed assisted emigration, and on my motion have resolved to call a public mass meeting in Boston to denounce the scheme and create public opinion against it. It may be a harsh measure for the unfortunate immigrants—it is. But we will let the odium for their condition fall on the shoulders of the English Government. It has been written to several persons here that you also were working in the interests of the Government scheme. We said that if this were so, they had deceived you by specious argument. Believe me, dear Miss O'Brien, there can be no co-operation between the Irish and the English Government on this matter. Even if our poor unhappy ones died on the wharves here, I for one would say—'let them die,' and let their death protest against the merciless hand that drives them out of their own land, which is rotting for want of human labour.

"Major Gaskell has, I believe, hired a man to receive his emigrants at this port.

"I beg of you to write me at once, if the report that you are associated with the Government agents is untrue. And if it is true, I beg you to pardon me if I trust that you will soon sever the connection. So long as Irishmen and women are found to aid such an accursed policy, so long will it be pursued. Your influence, marvellous and beautiful as it was, will die in one moment if it be known that you act as the agent of the Government. As it is at present, Major Gaskell can give you more information than I. Nothing will be done by Irishmen here to relieve the English Government of its difficulties

in getting rid of the people. As soon as Philadelphia learns that they are doing so, they too will stop.

"I cannot tell you how grieved I am to write such a letter to you. But I have written so for weeks in *The Pilot*, which you may have read."

The attacks on her which Boyle O'Reilly wrote of dated from some time back, and were not unknown to her, as is proved by this letter to the *Wisconsin* :—

"Sir,—Having received a copy of your paper of October 29th, containing my letter relative to the emigration law, I regret to see myself described as an agent of the British Government. I am not so, never have been, and never shall be so. I had at first to fight down the bitterest opposition from the English Board of Trade. Now we are working in harmony, but independently. I am no believer in the English idea that to improve Ireland you should exile its people, but I do believe in the duty of the Irish race here and in Ireland to make a united effort for the protection of those who must and will emigrate. To succeed in this I trust soon to be able to start a Western Emigration Aid Society, such as shall command the confidence and assistance of all true Irishmen. I could also, I feel sure, improve the foreign traffic, if the German emigrant societies would communicate with me, writing to Miss O'Brien, Emigrant Home, Queenstown, Ireland.

"Yours faithfully,

"C. G. O'Brien."

Her proposals and her point of view are more fully set out in another communication to the American Press :—

"Queenstown, Ireland,

"*January 9th*, 1883.

"Sir,—While in America, daily more and more was

impressed on my mind the great need of a larger organisation of the strength of the Irish-American nation in aid of immigrants. Now, I am utterly opposed to the English policy of state-aided emigration. I believe it to be fatal and misleading, useless in itself, and only fit to turn the attention from the more potent remedies of Land reform, industrial revival, and before and above all, self-government. But I cannot close my eyes to the fact that a large part of Ireland is in deep distress; that starvation is, in parts, imminent; that the steamship companies have lowered their fares, and that in America there is fair prosperity. That these circumstances combined will produce a heavy immigration next year, I look on as certain. No declamation will prevent it. Apart entirely from the Government emigration, a large number, probably not less than sixty or seventy thousand people, will leave the shores of Ireland next year; of these the largest proportion will go to the United States. Some will have money enough to go west to friends, but many will not. Of these how large a proportion will fall victims to the traps and snares of the great cities! How many girls whose life in America should be as the pure and holy mothers of a noble people will be led astray into the foul dens of New York! How many young men who might bring wealth and honour to the Irish name will sink into the life of saloon boardinghouses! How many fathers of families who, forced by the distress at home to flee to America, leaving behind wife and children to the mercy of neighbours as poor as themselves, will, week after week, dread to write home the empty letter—will try for work, with the anxiety of despair, and yet will know of wealth in the West while they famish in the East, while wife and children drift into the workhouses in Ireland! And all the while these men, these women, would be invaluable if in their right places on the western

lands, in the young cities, or on the great railways. If they even knew where certainly to find work they might make shift to get there. All that is wanted is organisation. Surely Irishmen who unite so readily in societies might unite in this object, which would turn a national weakness into strength. A poor, ignorant man leaves Ireland; he sinks to the lowest level in the great cities. He is lost to Ireland, his name and his race are blotted out, his children die, or if they live, it is too often a life of shame.

"See, on the other hand, what might be done with these sons of God and Ireland. Men of the West, unite! Stretch out your hands to meet the weak ones of your nation on their first landing; provide a small sum to advance means to take them where their work would be valuable. But union is far more wanted than money.

"Let us take any great Irish city in the West, say Chicago. Let the Irishmen there form a committee, ascertain where and what sort of labour is required in the State of Illinois; let them send such information to agents of the society in the eastern ports. In Philadelphia, the agents of the C. T. A. Union and of the Hibernian Society are already at work, and both would and could work directly with any western society. Let the committee arrange with some house of good Sisters to receive girls in Chicago, while places are being found for them. Let coffee boardinghouses for the young men take the place of the saloon boardinghouses. They may be made to pay equally well, and lead to good instead of evil. Let the clergy of the great church which has so long led Irishmen upward again take their place in this great movement. Let the holy women of the church think not alone of rescuing the lost, but rather of preserving the unstained youth of their sex. I believe I may say with certainty that the emigrant ship is no longer the scene of vice it once was.

"The emigrant reaches the shores of America uncontaminated: but there, how many evils lie in wait for them! The scandals daily being revealed in connection with Castle Garden are bad enough, but worse lies outside.

"Seeing that it is at present hopeless to get the steamship companies to exert themselves, I have decided, if I can get others to work with me, on going myself to New York to endeavour to get on foot some house for the protection of women. What I *can* do, Irishmen can depend on me, I will try to do. But will they put all the work on the shoulders of a woman? Will they have it to be said that only one, and that a woman, was to be found who cared for the children of Ireland when young and inexperienced, scarce knowing their right hand from their left when they reached their new country?

"Irishmen, the day is coming, the morn is dawning, when once more the nation may look homeward; when not emigration from Ireland, but emigration to Ireland, shall be the word; when a free nation at home shall welcome once more to its heart the sons and daughters who have gained knowledge and wealth and independence in exile. Look to that day as I look. See, then, what your duties are by the children of your nation who are still pouring into America. They are rude material, unshaped, unformed, and weak. Raise, unite, and educate them. Remember the day is coming when to America we shall look for our political strength, our wealth and capital, our industry, our knowledge, our enterprise, as we now look for our freedom and our hope. To you, the elder sons of the re-awakened Ireland, we look. Remember that the emigrant of to-day may be the soldier in the battle of freedom to-morrow—a battle which, as I believe, will be fought, not with the weapons of physical strength, but with the noble weapons of intellectual and moral force. Neglect these poor, these

ignorant, these weak Irishmen, and the nation will remain poor, weak, ignorant, and dissipated slaves. Receive them, raise them, protect and enrol them, and every man who leaves Ireland will be a greater strength to Ireland in America than ever he could be at home.

"I call on the National League of Irishmen in America, on all who honour the name of Ireland, on all who desire for her a new history and a name of freedom, to work for the improvement of the emigrant, to bring him out to the open field of Western America, or to the young and growing cities, where he can take the place God designed for him—now in the great new world, hereafter in the birthplace of his race.

"Faithfully yours,

"C. G. O'Brien."

The hope of her heart was to join in the movement inaugurated by Mr. William J. Onahan, forwarded by Archbishop (then Bishop) Ireland, for inducing the Irish emigrants to shun the cities and move out to the open lands of the West.

She wrote from America to Lady Monteagle :—

". . . There is no doubt that so far as appearances go at present I have been very successful. Everywhere I have gone the papers have lauded me in an absurd manner, but this is very useful as far as the work goes. I have gained information on every point I needed, seen the places I wanted to see, and shall be able to write more useful advice than the emigrants ever before have had. I have established inter-communication between different points and travelled about 4,000 miles of American soil, so that I have a good general notion of the country. I have been always in private houses, so I have seen the real internal life, and have entered into the internal interests of the country, and I am under bonds to come

here again probably in a few months. But the largeness of the work I have now on hands will force me to get a matron for my home at Queenstown. I must be free to move about myself. Will you post enclosed to Aunt Ellen. I am going to ask her to try and collect £30 or £40 to pay a matron. I hope it will only be for a year or two, and that by that time I shall be able to have established a really good system. I believe it may be a result of my work to start here, or rather to consolidate here, one of the greatest movements that has ever worked for the Irish people—a movement for systematically exporting the people to the West the moment they touch American shores, and doing this in connection with the temperance movement—Bishop Ireland at one end of the rope, Father Nugent and myself at the other, the Lines vying in improvements as they are—societies here at the ports. We have all the elements of success now, and Bishop Ireland is one of the greatest men in America. There has not been an hour or a day lost hitherto, and I am rejoiced to be turning homewards sooner than I expected."

But while she was thus exhorting her countrymen in the States to care for those who must and will emigrate, she was also uttering her plain warning through the Nationalist press at home. She wrote from the Emigrants' Home, Queenstown, to the Dublin *Freeman*, on December 6, 1882 :—

"Sir,—The question of State-aided emigration being now under consideration in all the Western parishes, I wish to put before the people one point to which, in my opinion, attention has not been sufficiently drawn, but which ought to have great weight in the emigration of families. It is the fact that the climate of America

kills the children in a most terrible way. I see a statement in a lecture of Bishop Ireland's (if I remember rightly) that seventy-five per cent. of the children born in New York among the poor Irish die. Certain it is that wherever I went, among rich or poor, I heard the same sad tale. I believe a vast number of those who wish to take advantage of the State-assisted emigration will do so, thinking to benefit their children. I tell them their children have a better chance of life, starving and barefoot at home, than living in comparative comfort in America. Let them go to America. They may escape, their children then will be better off; but let them go with a clear understanding that they may think themselves fortunate if they rear two out of every four they take out with them. Let them ask their neighbours who have been to America if I do not speak the truth. Let them ask those neighbours to describe the children in America. Are they rosy and hardy, if poor and ragged? No. They are well dressed, well cared for, sapless, lifeless, pale. '*It would keep you poor burying your children*,' said one woman to me; and it is true.

"It is not impossible that I may be myself somewhat mixed up with the carrying through of this Government emigration scheme. I therefore all the more decidedly wish to put on record my clear opinion that every Union in Ireland should bind themselves against having anything to do with this fatal gift. If people want to emigrate, the right persons to go are young men and women, matured, but still having the spring of youth. America is not the land of gold it is represented. It is a fine country, especially for women, and for those who have friends that can start them; but if I had children whom I loved, I would rather rear them on potatoes and salt at home than risk their lives by taking them immature to America.

"This is my clear, strong opinion, after travelling four or five thousand miles in America—north and south, east and west. The further north-west you go the better chance for the children; also, I think, in the south they do fairly well, but never as they do at home."

And, in truth, she was "mixed up" in the Government scheme in this sense, that she did not refuse shelter to those who, by the agency of the five pounds, were being huddled out of sight and out of mind. I was with her at Queenstown in my Easter vacation of that year for a few days. The home was not specially full—probably not more than thirty or forty persons in it. But such emigrants! My impression of that group, as they sat on benches round the big bare room, is one of a dreadful shyness and strangeness—like caught beasts. They were dressed in slop clothes, furnished by some philanthropic society, and doled out at random; one poor idiot, half grown, was in a suit that might have fitted a giant. Several spoke no English; one man was very old. I was almost relieved to hear that the United States had refused to receive that cargo of misery, and sent nearly all back to the country which was responsible for them.

And in the middle of that silent, sick, and drooping company I remember a young man, some creature of the town, standing up and singing impudently an indecent song. That is the only time in my life that I ever heard the like before Irish peasant women, and it brought home sharply to me the fact that Charlotte O'Brien's solicitude for the girl emigrants was deeply justified. That little company was not merely alone, but forlorn—adrift from all its moorings, pushed from behind all the barriers that had so closely guarded each of them.

The life of the house was like existence in a railway tation, bare, draughty, clamorous, comfortless. I am

not sure that deafness did not spare her something at this time, though it was a great hindrance: Mrs. Dickson had always to accompany her in visiting the ships.

But when I look on the record of her work in America, as I find it in old newspaper cuttings, it is amazing how little physical disabilities weighed on her. She had never spoken in public; yet she addressed great audiences successfully; she was extremely deaf, yet she went everywhere making acquaintances, making friends, entering into the whole life of the place as very few women could do with every natural advantage. Here is an early letter, bubbling over with excitement:—

"I will tell you how this day has been spent. It is in a tenement house in the worst street in New York, to begin with, that I am writing. First at 9 o'clock in comes Mr. James Rogers, agent of Tammany Board of Education, to take council with me about a letter relative to the Baltic, which had been extinguished by the *Star* paper. I had been previously interviewed by this reporter. Then I went to inspect two emigrant lodginghouses next door. Then John Downes joined me, and he took me off to see Cardinal McCloskey; thence to visit an aunt of his in another tenement house at the other side of the city; then home. Mr. Rogers then took me out to luncheon, and thence to the Board of Education. There I was introduced to Hon. Lawrence Vierman, and had a long chat with him. He is very charming, like Joe Hennessy in looks and ways, only, as you may suppose, from his occupying so high a position (Secretary, Board of Education), a highly educated man. He showed me all over the Board Hall, and was very pleasant. I go to stay with him on Thursday, and shall desert my poor surroundings then probably nearly for good. Thence with Mr. Rogers to the *Sun* paper office. I am to be inter-

viewed to-morrow by their reporter in the morning, and taken out to Ward's Island, the hospital of Castle Garden, by Mr. Jackson, the Superintendent, in the afternoon. Thursday I have to visit the 'Normal School' for the training of teachers with the President, I think, of the building. In the evening to Mr. Kiernan's, where I am to meet some influential men. You will see that I am fairly afloat from this account of a few days. I can hardly attempt to write fully, for in fact my days are all taken up; but I have hitherto been successful in a large degree. I think I shall not find it necessary to remain quite so long as I expected away from home. It is lovely; I haven't been a week yet in New York before I am going 'lobbying' on a little private job of my own. I am to interview the Hon. John Kelly, who is in the Government, to try and get Government work for John Downes. That's the way we Yanks manage matters. The Hon. John Kelly is said to be likely to be willing to do anything for me, so I hope poor John Downes will get his place. Don't fear, my heart is turning to Old Ireland still—I'd take the next ship home with a good heart if I had my work complete. I have a deal to do yet before I can set my foot again in the dear land."

In truth, whether in New York or Queenstown, her heart was always turning to the "dear land" and those whom she specially loved. Here is a letter, written in 1882, to her younger niece, which resumes all her abiding interests—the love for her children, her concern with public affairs, and, with these, that delighted sense of Nature's changing beauty which solaced her loneliness, and yet always bred in her the longing for those she loved to share her joy in it:—

"My Darling Child,—It is in a way true our ways a re growing apart, and it is not true, and I do not think

it will be so much so in the future. I begin to see my way toward a plan for getting out of all this fight My work is done in the main. Certainly the ships are vastly improved, and, what is even more important, the Board of Trade is thoroughly awake, refusing to pass over the slightest infringements of the law, and pressing reform every way. Just now I am fighting for the foreign emigrants in Liverpool—and am hopeful.

"I am sending you a *Nation* with a poem of mine, which speaks your thoughts too, dear Polly Flinders. I am writing somewhat just at present. The lodging-house work I am taking no part in this year, except living in the house. John is manager entirely now. I expect that another year or two will see the house on a public basis, and I out of it altogether. Meanwhile, I must go to America.

"But as soon as you go to Cahirmoyle I will go there for a fortnight or so, and go a-maying. Then will the cowslips shine forth among the dewy grasses, then will the tender blossoms of the crab-trees array themselves in rosy light, then will the dainty curling leaflets show grey and downy in the low evening light. Then, oh Mary! we shall be at home, and the sweet country walks will be beneath our feet. Then too will the little birds sing on every bough, and the sweet, sweet never-ending tale of the springtide begin afresh for the refreshment of all souls that have aches and pains and spots in their insides—Oh, Mary, I found a little slug eating my fern the other day. I didn't murder it, it looked so tender and innocent. I took it away and put it in some moss. I could have kissed it only it was so slimy."

So it closes, with a laugh—her own kindly laughter. The sense of humour pervaded her whole life like sunshine through a day of clouds, breaking out ever and again, and bringing health and comfort.

The poem which she refers to is that upon the emigrants—the group I saw. Probably her talk with me over what I had seen stimulated her to expression, which echoes the note of the first letter written to the same niece on this subject. That was her central preoccupation—the care for the purity of unprotected young girls.

My memory of her in those days reflects a curious blending of intense mental life and energy and interest, with a flagging and inconstant vitality. That impression was faithful, though it is only now, after all these years, that I learn the causes, physical and moral, of what even my boyish observation perceived.

First, and this was no small matter, she was threatened while still at her post with the loss of her nearest ally. Mr. Dickson had made up his mind to leave the police and enter the Irish Church: this would mean their departure from Queenstown.

Charlotte O'Brien wrote suggesting that he might take work in Liverpool among the poor Irish of that great city, and then she herself might keep in touch with them. For she said (writing from my father's house in the north, where she was on a visit)—"I am very happy here, but really it has come to be almost Ruth and Naomi—'Where thou dwellest, I will dwell.'"

Then, later in that year, came the culmination of trouble in another sort. She found herself menaced with the apprehension of mortal disease in its cruellest form. I give in full this letter, so complete in its revelation of her courage, her piety, and her weariness:—

"Dearest Molly,—

"I send you a note of Stephen's and another letter about which I wish you and Willie to keep absolute silence. You will see from it I have had something

wrong, sufficiently serious to make me uneasy. I mean to wait another month, it has gone on for nearly two already, and if it is still going on then, to go to Dublin and see Dr. McDonnell. It is some strange pain and tenderness in the right breast, so that a very light touch will cause acute pain, and even the movement of the arm often. It may be nothing but overstrained nerves. That it is that I know, but it may be more, and its being such a nasty thing in any shape to have an unexplained tenderness in the breast, I thought it better to write to Dr. McDonnell. I have always meant to tell you and Willie at once if I had reason to believe it might be serious, but you see I don't know as yet. Dr. McD.'s letter is reassuring, but he does not at all suggest what he thinks may be the cause. I'm well enough, and able for hard work, and jolly with Scan, who has filled Crib's place, with a difference, but this goes on steadily all the same. As for me, I will not say I am quite indifferent. I don't think I am, but rather that my wishes lean the wrong way. It's a painful way of getting out of the world, but it would be a blessing to have all fight and miseries and responsibilities absolutely laid aside, and it might make peace. In any case the bringing this near to me has been a mental rest, and you know I never had any constitutional fear. I'll let you know if the Dr.'s stuffs are any good, but I don't think I shall be able to judge so soon, it goes up and down so much. What I should think of doing is going to you for New Year's Day, if I go at all, and spending the month with you, but if I am well, I shan't leave home. I have a wish to spend Christmas at home. I enclose a cutting of the German society. This is the prayer of the society; I wish you'd write it down and use it:

"'Hear, O Lord, our prayers, and lead with Thy blessing the way of Thy servants, that in all that may befall them

in their wanderings and in their life they may rejoice in Thy steadfast protection. Amen.'

"Dear Molly, if this were the end of the little comedy after all, it would hit you harder than anyone, but it's likely enough it's only a passing thing, and if it is not, it's only a short time after all, and if our life is truly in God's hand, what are the few years with the unfailing and growing love? I am queer about that. I think I should feel the separation from the little earthly things, the flowers especially, which one can't someway reproduce, more than with the eternal souls which are always there. Strange to cling most to the most passing of all things, those which under our eyes are reproduced daily new, as if that power which renews their beauty in new forms hourly were unable to give them to us again! And after all, in meeting death we must stand between two alternatives, either absolute death and all the aspirations of the human mind having been empty vanity—or life in God's hand, more directly, more visibly than here. Take either alternative, and why wish for life? I do not.

"Yours,

"C. G. O'B."

After it comes another, on the same theme of the anticipation of death:—

"Dearest Molly,—

"Don't fret about it. I feel much better these days, and in a more reasonable frame of mind. Of course it is true, I have had a sore hard turn, but it's a great consolation to have a Dr. to turn to who understands one's constitution, and doesn't snub one's poor nervous system. Not that I speak of this as the hard turn. This, for myself, I could meet far more easily than I have met my other troubles. I'm taking the medicines, and the plaster is very soothing, and the days are exquisite, and

I have just made a grand new border by the rhododendrons, seventy yards long. I have it edged with forget-me-not, inside of those yellow polyanthus, inside of those wallflowers. Think of that. I suppose at least 500 wallflowers, same or more primroses and forget-me-not close as it will go, rhododendrons and mixed flowers behind. Won't it be pretty? Even bare it is a great improvement.

"Scan has got her pups, none good I fear, though I keep three to rear.

"I'll write to you often and tell you how I am, till this new question settles itself. Only I thought you'd like to know, but it seems selfish to put an anxiety on you which you will feel more than I do. But in any case this physical fright has done me good. It's rather a blessing to have the shortness of all one's troubles forced on one. I wrote these lines last night; needless to say, they are an allegory, the reading of which will not be hard to you:—

Alas! the summer past away and gone!
Summer that seemed so sweet, so bright, so new,
So faithful and so true;
So loved of every flower, leaf and stone—
Summer that laid its hand upon the sea,
And stilled to harmony
Its subtle shiftings and its treacherous moan.

Summer and joy, summer and life seemed one,
And winter, death, and cruel, cold and bare
To all things fair.
Yet in the winter was the new life won,
The new leaf formed, and the tumultuous sea
Set pure and free—
Its rotting falsehoods on the black sands strewn.

Arise, O Lord! Behold we are Thine own
Throughout this stormy year, this bitter year
Thou still wert near.
Thou wentest with us through the depths unknown—
And all the wild, the dark mysterious sea
Was peace to Thee—
By Thee the ground was tilled, the seed was sown.
Dec. 4th, 5th.

The reading of the allegory was in truth not hard for that close and dear friend. This year of turmoil and sorrow, 1883, marked the turning point of her life, the close of her strength, the final good-bye to youth. It was accompanied by those other troubles which, as she said, were so far harder to meet than the dread of disease. Out of her emigration work had sprung a friendship, which passed into another feeling, and the end was bitter disillusion. Yet even from this trial she emerged, hurt, indeed, and deeply shaken, but with the central sanity of her nature clear and sound.

"It's all over," she cries, like one regaining breath after some ghastly swoon, "it's all over, thank God, and the woods are full of anemones and springing ferns."

So she wrote to her niece Mary—though only hinting vaguely at the trouble which had encompassed and obscured her days. For the last word on all this time I quote a longer passage from that letter:—

"The outskirts and trimmings of that nature that makes me hold fiercely to my friends have been getting me into trouble; the core, the very heart and centre is with you young ones—you three. If you would just realise how your being home, especially when you come to me here, makes such a difference. If you come home in May you will find everything in great beauty, for though

the spring began early, it is now not at all early I think, and another month will bring it to perfection. My garden is very bright. I don't know why you never send for flowers now. My basket is away. When Cath sends it back I will send some, but my chief beauty are the anemones and scarlet tulips. The anemones I don't gather, because I want the seed, for I have lovely kinds, so only pull the worst, and it's hard to make up one's mind to pick tulips that won't send up second flowers, but keep so long bright in the garden. I have had a more plentiful supply of hot water over my shoulders in the last three years through my own faults and my neighbours that can well be imagined; and to say the truth, I feel rather as if I were left without a skin; but if I have, I have, too, made many friends, who are not mercenary friends, and who will not forget me. It is wonderful how my American friends have stood to me; it is so easy to take a person up and be civil for a few days to one coming in the name of a public cause, but to retain them as true friends when you know the chances are you will never meet again is what one hardly dares look for, but what they have done. I send two letters, which show the true and gentle spirit in which I was met, which show, too, the way in which the work is regarded."

The postscript to that letter tells me that I was again spending my Easter vacation in her company, and I must try to set out some of my impressions of these years. They were chiefly of dogs. All her family were dog-loving, but to her dogs were the chief companions, the gaiety of her life. Irish wolfhounds and brown water spaniels were the kinds specially affected by her brothers; she devoted herself to the Irish terrier, a breed upon which she had theories, set out in a letter to the *Irish*

Homestead of 12th March, 1898. The "really separate big Irish breed" should be "over 30 lbs. in weight, or 2 stone at least; they should be hard-haired, well-frilled, and have large lustrous eyes: they should be tall on the legs and powerful; they may be grey, black-backed, or red; a little white is often found on the chest, but usually nowhere else."

But, in truth, her concern was with character and talents rather than show points, and no dog has so much character, good and bad, as the Irish terrier. "Crib" was the leading dog of this period, the Cuchulain of that cycle; and certainly I never saw his equal. He could count. His mistress would hold up her hands outspread, and you named any number up to ten; Crib would put his paw on the appropriate finger. But Crib's performing tricks were (in all senses) the cheapest part of his endowment. He fought, of course, ceaselessly; but his passion was for the chase. He hunted anything, and sheep by preference, and would take away with him sober respectable dogs, pointers and such like, that had never trespassed in their lives, into some wild buccaneering, after which a bill would come in. Consequently, he had to be moored fast when not under supervision; and no rope would hold him. Once that I remember, he had been attached by a chain to a mowing machine, and when we sought him he and the machine had disappeared: we found them an incredible distance off, tangled round a telegraph post.

He was one of a band. I take this from a letter of Feb. 10, 1881:—

"Colleen is growing very pretty, like a little fox. Garry, too, though still stubbly and quite wonderfully fat and soft and big, will, I think, be pretty in a few months. They are both dear little things, and amuse

my lonely hours. Crib as usual, only, perhaps, a little more sentimental than ever when I notice the others."

Then here is a tragedy, later in that year:

"Fancy what a dreadful blow I have just escaped. All the dogs have had distemper: Crib so bad they thought he would die. They are all right again now, all the terriers, only very thin and ragged looking. If Crib had died, I don't think I should ever have been able to stay at home, but the darling was there all right before me. You should have seen him, he had so much to tell me. If ever a dog was trying to talk he was, sitting before me, his little mouth open and trembling, and with little squeaks, his eyes jumping out of his head. All the others were tearing about, but he was trying, trying to speak."

Together, the dogs were like a troupe of comedians for her. Their rehearsed performances were diverting enough. At Queenstown one of the young dogs used to go to Crib to get his blessing—the old dog, erect on a chair, with outstretched paws, the other begging submissively on the floor. But, of course, the life of the thing was in their mutual relations to each other and to their mistress.

Somewhere about 1884 Crib's day ended. He went off on one of his raids and reappeared no more. It would be senseless to underrate the grief that this loss caused to one so dependent on this companionship. For months no dog took his place; my recollection is that the others were disbanded and that my aunt was dogless, till one day (driving from Cahirmoyle to Ardanoir) a storm of rain sent her into a cottage, where a snarling, yapping terrier bitch attacked the stranger. The fierce little thing's head and bright eyes made a sudden conquest;

Charlotte Grace O'Brien in later life.

here was the companion she had been seeking, and she insisted on making friends. The dog snapped at her outstretched hand, she let it meet its teeth in her; puzzled and perturbed the wild creature growled still, but submitted to be handled; was purchased, was carried away, and became "Scan" (from its keen peering eyes), the mother of many generations. One of the descendants bit me instantly the last time that I crossed the threshold of Ardanoir.

For all but herself the dogs were too numerous, and above all too noisy; but she, who did not hear them, loved to see them excited and amused. "'Scan,'" she would say, "wild dogs! wild dogs on the hill!" and on the instant Scan's bristles would be up, and there would be a dash to the window and a passion of barking. She liked rough play with them, too; would encourage them to growl and snap in pretended onslaughts, and again and again her clothes would get torn; she herself would be marked with sharp little teeth. But she loved them all, and was always their absolute mistress.

The history of her life after she left Queenstown has its clearest landmarks in the history of her animals; and I print now a highly characteristic letter which tells of a new acquisition as well as of her preoccupations with public life:—

"Dearest Mary,—I got your letter when out driving to-day, and have been rather burning to answer it ever since, only I don't know where to begin, for you have got so the English notion of this movement that I am puzzled to know what to deny. First as to separation. Mr. Parnell is no more asking for separation than Grattan, O'Connell, or my father. What we are seeking is, 'No power on earth has the right to make laws for Ireland but the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland.' That was

Grattan's, that is ours. Again and again Parnell has spoken of the link of the Crown. I, for one, am less of a separatist now than I was before the Land League started, and I feel sure many would say the same. Then as to murder and outrage, even Lord Spencer admits the National Party are doing their best to keep it down; and as to boycotting—well I have always held that a perfectly legitimate weapon just as blackballing at a club is.

"Now for my news. *I* too have an acquisition. I have bought another pony! It is a yellow pony when long-haired, with black mane, tail, and legs. It is, relatively speaking, as broad as the Shannon, or rather like a lake—as broad as it is long. It is as fat as 'Scan,' with a small head. It had such a fell of hair that John, clipping it, said it wasn't like hair at all, but fur. Like what the barber said to Uncle Donough: 'You might as well cut a field of stubble!' Well, you need not be onasy about him, for John says he never saw so quiet a horse. 'You needn't be more afraid of him than a horse of wood!' Well, he bundles along over the ground really at a pretty good pace, but he seems to go so slow, you have to take your watch and time him to give him credit for his pace. Meanwhile, as he jogs along he wags his thick, big tail all the time behind his fat legs—wag—wag—wag—wag—so that his back view suggests the utmost of comfort. He looks tremendously strong, with a neck like a cart-horse, and is large enough to look really very pretty in the phaeton. As I have always held that all old maids ought to have yellow ponies, and as he is just my ideal for an old maid turnout, I call him 'Amen Czartorisky,'* as he is the very Amen of ponies, the end of all my prayers in the equine line. He is a Galway pony, brought by a poor man who swaps horses. So far

* I cannot explain Czartorisky.

we find him sound, but he clearly had never been in a carriage. He had not a notion how to throw his strength on it the first day; now he goes better. I mean to turn him on the grass all the summer, so he won't cost much to keep; and as for his price, well, it was about what you would give in England for a well-favoured donkey, £7 10s. We had great bargaining for about a fortnight for him, and the more I see of him the more charmed I am with him. He has such a pretty, gentle little head, and looks so thoroughly jovial, and is so quiet; his pace is about six miles an hour—not *express;* but I expect he'd keep it up all day, and none the worse, if I wanted him. At least if he isn't tremendously strong, his looks belie him."

We may leave "Amen," the end of all prayers, to reappear later on, as he is bound to do, and revert to the political beginning of her letter.

Her pre-occupation with the struggle of that day is evidenced by many poems in the volume of "Lyrics" published by Gill, of Dublin, in 1886—the year of the first Home Rule Bill. And though among these is the fourth of her sonnets to Gladstone, there is much more evidence of the temper shown in the third. Some of the others are slashing Nationalist ballads, belonging to rhetoric rather than to literature. She wrote in 1881 to her nieec Nelly:—

"The action of the Government has sent me over root and branch to the National side. I think it would be our bounden duty to fight if it were anything else than knocking our heads against the wall, and as we can't fight, at least we need not lie down, or pretend to be satisfied. Therefore, in a matter-of-business sort of way I am writing poems to the *Nation* as a protest. I hear the first published has taken, and a priest in Scotland

having put an air to it, it is to appear to music in the next *Nation*. You sing 'Ninety-eight,' will you sing a rebel song of mine ? "

But the collection keeps many other memories alive. There are poems of the emigrant home, poems of the Atlantic crossing, several poems descriptive of America. These, as well as the distinctively political verse, appeared from time to time in Nationalist newspapers at home, and also in the *Boston Pilot*. One of them drew from Boyle O'Reilly (on June 11, 1884) a characteristic letter (he had written the praises of Bromidon) :—

" Carragh and Bromidon never weary the soul or vex. Your poem is very beautiful and very pathetic. It has a dear old unreasoning Irish wail in its reproach—it is Carragh's own voice crying that no Irishman has a right to think any foreign brook so beautiful as an Irish brook. It is an exquisite poem ; and if my hasty sketch evoked so tender a word, I shall respect it more than I have hitherto done. I do not know the Carragh : the river I know best in Ireland is the Boyne. But I know many American rivers and brooks, for I am an inveterate canoeist.

" Now, because you have given up the home for girls shall we never see you again ? Surely you must come to America for yourself, as you came before for others. Come and see one of our lovely rivers, and divide your heart with it and the Carragh. Or are you happier being true to the dear face you have known so long ? Devotion has its recompense—even if new souls fascinate. The light-o'-love have shallow joys. If I knew the Carragh I think I should love it so that I should not wish to look at the brooks of Paradise. But my ideals are American—in rivers at least. I have lost something—as a Hungarian woman loses when she puts

away her braided bodice. The cosmopolite is commonplace. I should like to take you to the Bromidon, and show you its soft meadow banks and its brown eddies and shadowy deeps; but I should like to hold your heart from its uttermost beauty—for the sweet Carragh's sake."

The "Lyrics" achieved no success in Ireland, and she entertained, as all Irish writers do, the delusive dream of a sale in America. Boyle O'Reilly, writing to her in February, 1887, dispelled that illusion:—

"We Irish in America are a great power for work and politics, &c., but we do not buy books. My books are sold, but not to my own people."

He went on to refer to her series of Cahirmoyle sonnets which were being written in this year, and of which she had told him. It was her last sustained literary effort. The reading public had given her no encouragement to continue, and her health was not equal to the strain which any serious writing entails. Moreover, about this time her mind was filled with a new and absorbing interest. I cannot give the story of her change of religion better than in her own words, written to her younger niece:—

"Dearest Polly,—

"Just a word before I go to bed. I knew you and Nell would understand I had thought much about the question of religion. You know that I came very near holding views like your father's. My whole life experience, however, has been to lead me to believe not only in revelation, but in the personal communion between God and man. Also, I could not fail to see that agnostics lose a vast territory of the most splendid human thought,

or thought human and divine. Then in the great crisis of my life, faith asserted itself, and swept away doubt. Then came—if revelation is true, do Protestants stand right who confine it to a limited period in Church history? Then I went to America, and all along through my life I saw the intense and loving faith of Catholic laymen and priests; I went into convent after convent, and saw the saintly faces. Everywhere I saw the intense reality of Catholic faith shown in self-denial and works for God and man. I have been consciously to myself watching the question since I was in America, eight years ago, but have been too sick for reading or mental work. Last spring I was present at the death of a little child, killed by a blast on the road here. At her death all the village of Foynes knelt and prayed all through her last agony, the priest being there only for a moment, as he was only passing by on his way to Limerick. It was a scene of such truly Christian worship as brought me face to face with the desire to enquire. That, and also because in America the great witness for Christian moral life as against divorce is the Catholic Church; and here in Ireland, where faith is a living power, morality is strongest—moral life, religious life, pure and intense. 'By their fruits ye shall know them.'

"That evening I told A. de Vere I meant to enquire, and asked not for controversial books, but for devotional. I read for three or four months, then I went to Mass, but said I had not decided. Since then, I was in Dublin. I insisted on Father Russell teaching me. Not a Catholic except Aubrey de Vere would ever be drawn into a controversy till I myself lately forced them into it. Since then I have read everything I could lay my hands on, on both sides, and I am satisfied that, to me at least, if revelation is true, Truth lies with the Catholics. Catholic worship in their churches is so intense, so

devotional—it makes the spiritual exercises of Protestant congregations seem hardly worship at all. I have had such a lot of letters from people, known and unknown, all with one voice saying just the same as these two letters. Dear Lord Emly, was it not good of him to write so! Send it back to me. Aubrey de Vere's letter you can imagine. Lucy and Lucius, of course, are sorry, but they don't understand what the Catholic faith is. If ever you want to look into the question don't believe Protestant accounts of it. They knock down foes that have no real existence—as in their quarrels with agnostics."

That letter tells all that need be told of this deep change in her life, save what may be learnt from the words spoken at the Mass before her burial by Father O'Kennedy, which will be found at a later page of this Memoir.

The love of her people and the love of her religion which was theirs, were from this one: she defended their faith as she defended their history and their character, incorporating herself with them. Yet even in her defence, as in the letter which she wrote to Mr. Standish O'Grady's *All Ireland Review* only a few years before her death, her utterance was the utterance of one nurtured on the Bible, possessing that close familiarity with it which is the special heritage of good Protestants.

Very soon after her change of religion came a crisis which divided her allegiance. Parnell fell, and fell fighting. Those of his associates who were foremost in the opposition were men who had touched her imagination more than he. Michael Davitt and John Dillon had been praised by her in poems, not the less sincere because less accomplished than some of her other work. Yet she sided passionately with Parnell, and against Parnell were arrayed all the forces of her Church.

But it was no new thing for her to be sharply estranged in opinion from those whom she most held in esteem, and here, too, no personal severance followed. What followed, for her and for all Ireland, in that long-drawn out and bitter contention was a weariness of disgust, a slackening of interest in the whole political movement. And though she never changed her mind, and was to the day of her death 'as much the Land Leaguer as ever,' and as fully convinced that the political leaders of Ireland were striving for the just and necessary consummation of hope by the only means practicable, her personal interest, in the last period of her life, lay rather in the developments of co-operation and mutual credit associations—objects keenly pushed forward by her kindred at Foynes and Cahirmoyle—and in the work of the Gaelic League.

IV.

Her Personality and her Last Years.

The Parnell "split" is the last marking date in her life. I have told all the story there is to tell. What remains is to give as best I may, with the help of others, some picture of that vivid, vigorous, eccentric, and most loveable personality, which displayed itself in private life after growing infirmity had cut her off from all forms of public activity.

Let me give, to begin with, this connected impression written by her friend and kinswoman, Miss Catherine Spring Rice:—

"I remember her first as a young woman with a perfect exuberance of life, energy and joyousness; almost

every interest out of door and indoor appealed to her, and in its turn gave her intense pleasure; even music, though she was quite devoid of ear, was made, till deafness intervened, a source of pleasure through sheer force of intellect and susceptibility to any form of artistic expression. Few women have the intense delight she took in all that belongs to open-air life, coupled with her keen interest in the world of letters. Natural history, poetry, books of all kinds—religious, scientific, historical—everything came as grist to her mill, and filled up the hours when stress of weather (it had to be pretty bad before it was taken any notice of) or absolute darkness kept her indoors. Then with returning light and sunshine she would be 'off out': the mere phrase suggests her, and brings back the recollection of her long walks over hill and dale, straight across the wide grass country round Cahirmoyle; her botanising expeditions, her adventurous climbs on the rocks at Kilkee, her daring swims in the Atlantic and the swift-flowing Shannon; and when advancing years had put an end to all these, her long days of hard work among her flowers, her love for which amounting to a passion, did indeed 'first come' and 'to the last endure.' She had a most ardent, impulsive, and, at the same time, a happy nature, full of enthusiasm and admiration for what she felt to be great and good in thought and deed in the past, and for the living men and women with whom she came in contact. In her young days there was a touching self-abandonment in the way she, so to speak, flung herself at the feet of those she admired—'She must be very sweet-tempered to bear her deafness thus,' was the remark of a keen observer on seeing her for the first time, when it was beginning to cut her off, but long before the hopeless cloud had settled down over her life. In all characters there is something which is a source of weak-

ness; in her it lay in a rashness of nature, which was apt to involve her in difficulties by leading her to plunge into things without due consideration, and with complete disregard of advice. Also, with all her splendid courage, physical and moral, which corresponded to her vigour of body and mind, there was a tendency to get mentally over-wrought. Once, at any rate, she was near to a nervous break-down. In the same way what appeared in youth to be exuberant strength must have had some underlying weakness, which, joined to a serious carriage accident, led to failure of health at a comparatively early age.

"In 1868 she undertook what became, apart from her exertions on behalf of emigrants, the work of her life—namely, the charge of Edward's children. It lasted for ten years, and well did she fulfil it. This at least was the opinion I heard generally expressed by their mother's relations, who would naturally be the most severe judges. During it they were the dominant interest in her life, and, I believe, on the whole she must have been very happy. The maternal instinct was strong in her, and it was fully satisfied. She had ample freedom to take up the occupations and interests she cared for. She had a great capacity for friendship with men, and the wifely instinct would, no doubt, have developed had marriage been her fate, but as it was she did not feel it so strongly as many women, and it was counterbalanced by much independence of nature, and a strong desire to live 'her own life'—a favourite phrase. Fits of morbid depression, no doubt, she had now, as later in life, but she would pour out her soul in her verses, or perhaps in a letter to an intimate friend, and regain her spirits with a bound.

"In 1874 I remember her being one of a large and merry young party at Kilkee, and in company with one or two male members of it, one of whom was something

of an Alpine climber, she started off on an adventurous climb on the rocks. Shoes and stockings were quickly discarded for safety's sake. Another time, of course, on a calm day, she swam out from the Amphitheatre, round the Pulpit rock, and back to her starting point, where landing was not altogether easy, calm though it was. Another time she swam across the Shannon to Foynes Island and back, a distance of close to a quarter of a mile each way, and rendered more formidable by the strong current.

"In 1875 she and I went together to pay one or two visits in Lancashire and Cumberland. The obvious route to take was to cross to Holyhead and proceed thence by North Western Railway. This, however, was far too tame for Charlotte. She, therefore, felt it necessary for her health or her purse, I really forget which, to avoid railway travelling as much as possible, so we arranged to cross from Dublin to Douglas in the Isle of Man, and there take another steamer to Barrow, in Lancashire. The drawback to the plan was that one boat arrived at Douglas at 2 a.m. and the other did not start till 6 a.m. 'O never mind,' said Charlotte, 'the boat will be there at the pier—we shall go on board.' I don't know whether the boat was there or not, but anyway we could not get on her, and we had to pile up our rugs on the pier and sleep there. I have a lively remembrance of being waked from uneasy sleep to a view of Douglas bathed in morning sunshine by small dogs barking at the unusual spectacle of two females, huddled in wraps, lying asleep on the pier.

"During these years, before deafness cut her off, the friends she made among the working people of County Limerick were a great interest to her. There were, in especial one or two clever young men who had taken to verse writing, whose efforts she used to read and criticise,

and with whom she used to have long talks on politics. I remember her saying she should never have felt dull if she could have continued to go freely among the people hearing their talk—they were such good company.

"Early in 1877 came the death of her brother Charlie—a great grief to her—and in that year she fell into a nervous state, and was a good deal out of health. In the spring of 1878 Edward resolved to shut up Cahirmoyle, and to send his daughters to school in England. It was a great blow to her, and in every way a great break up. He returned to Cahirmoyle in, I think, 1880, but as his second marriage had taken place in the interval, it was never her home again. It was fortunate that some years before this it had come into her head to build herself a house beside the Shannon. With characteristic happy knack she hit on the ideal site of the whole locality. The place was from the first a delight to her, and by degrees, as she made the garden and shrubbery and laid out rough paths on the rocky hillside, it became a charming little home. She called it Ardanoir—the Height of Gold—from the golden gorse with which the hill is covered in spring.

"From 1878 till her death it remained her home, though she had several long absences from it. Here, after she had become totally deaf, she lived—sometimes with no companions but her beloved dogs, always surrounded by flowers and growing plants—always a welcoming hostess to all friends and relations as they turned up. Her gift as a hostess was quite remarkable; when perfectly deaf, she contrived somehow to make a roomful of guests enjoy themselves and feel at home with one another and herself."

I have alluded to her fashion, or lack of fashion, in dress, and the photographs will give some idea of her.

Add colour, and you should have light brown hair, complexion very clear and somewhat sanguine, a bright pink showing pleasantly on the cheeks, and especially on the high cheek bones; eyes blue-grey, small, but full of light and laughter. At moments she was really picturesque when dressed, as, for instance, her kinswoman recalls her at Cahirmoyle in a gown of black velveteen, with flowers in her hair chosen with her never-failing sense of their artistic value.

Her gift as a hostess, referred to above, always seemed to me to be one of her most extraordinary qualities: and she exerted it deliberately, not only for her own amusement, but for the profit of those who were dear to her. With all her love for her home, and with Ardanoir yearly increasing in beauty, she was the least stay-at-home of mortals; and her narrow income never seemed to hinder her from doing what she was set on. In the nineties she found a generation of young people, her nephews and nieces—not only her own particular care, but the daughters of her brothers Lucius and Charles—growing up in the country, and it was her inclination to give them the opportunity of meeting a wider society. Very largely with that object she took again and again some kind of temporary abode in Dublin (once also in London); and wherever she settled she drew interesting people about her by the force and charm of her own personality. She was, to use a favourite word in that family, very enterprising—a new venture always amused her—and she used to tell with pride how she, cut off by deafness, without any means of providing entertainment, got people together about her in London. Rising young men brilliant young women, gathered to her to discuss their own outlook on life, even their own most intimate affairs—interested in her because she was so original, so candid, and, above all, so profoundly interested in them.

Especially was she interested by the growing difficulties in the position of women: the paper (printed here for the first time) on the "Feminine Animal" exists among her MSS. in many shapes and rehandlings.

Her detachment from the activities of life was beginning to affect her literary temper; and whereas till now she had either used the pen as an instrument to forward some public purpose or to express in verse her own personal emotion, I find her now observing and speculating on the lives and emotions of others, attracted, not towards fiction, but to that form so little handled by women, the prose essay. She commented on this tendency in herself in what was to have been the first of a series of "Soap Bubbles": —

"I write because I have the desire of writing on me, because talk and life going on round me has led me to think vividly on many subjects, because also, being myself on the threshold of age, yet with a strong sympathy for the young, I have been able to look close on the lives of three generations—that now taking possession of the world, my own, and my father's."

These earliest of her essays were not successful, and she, no austere critic of her own work, never printed them, but their subjects are worth noting. There is a paper on "London Lodgings," which begins with a picture of the unhomeliness and isolation of that life of myriad creatures, each separate in its cell, and then passes to thoughts of Irish friends meeting and greeting, of gifts of flowers bringing memories of far off beauty.

"So we decorate our rooms with human sympathy, our walls with graceful and gracious kindliness. Is it so bare a lodging after all?"

Yet the underlying current of thought in that essay

bears upon the same theme as that handled in the "Feminine Animal"—the growing disinclination to face all the consequences of marriage; and I find another phase of it in another paper on "The Evolution of the Cold Blooded," where hot age cries out on provident youth.

"Sweet reasonableness and so forth! I confess I am somewhat impatient of this sweet reasonableness united with solid and well-founded self-satisfaction, which seems so much the fashion among *fin de siècle* young men and women; and then they look with such sublime superiority on their elders who have the blood of life flowing in their veins instead of a coagulated fluid. Besides, it is annoying, they have so much the stronger position with their sweet reasonableness. We elders feel and love, get angry, or are grateful, maybe for little things which are the outcome of great things. The young ones have not grasped, do not seek after the great things; that little things should so touch us appears to them a craze. . . ."

So far London. But the real centre of her social activities in these years was Dublin. My mother's household gave her a centre there, and she camped one year about a mile off, somewhere in Rathmines, and another year in a pleasant little house with a garden, called Woodville, in Clonskeagh. Here was a meeting ground for many different natures—but chiefly for those concerned with letters or art—notable among whom were Douglas Hyde, leader of the Gaelic League, the honoured friend of her latest days, and Walter Osborne, most beloved of painters.

People from outside our own circle of friends used to arrive there too; and I can date Woodville about 1894 or 1895, because Mr. Charles Trevelyan, now

Under-Secretary of Education, but then attached to Lord Aberdeen's staff at the Viceregal establishment, was a constant figure at these gatherings.

There are many droll memories of those years, whether in Dublin or in County Limerick, and one of the drollest is recorded in a letter to her niece Mary (Mrs. Cane). I give the whole as a picture of her life:—

"Fancy us with the luxury of a tiny bright fire of sticks, the open window, and the lamp to make all look real snug: Mabel and Miss C. at draughts, and the room decorated with ferns and rowan berries. I am in a light cotton near the fire in my chair, enjoying a well-earned rest, having actually walked up to Mt. Trenchard to-day and a good part of the way back moreover, and not tired. I thought I would show myself off to Eilish before she expected me, so went up to luncheon unasked, and received a most warm welcome. I can walk with a good conscience now and drive, for Dr. Kidd told me it would be good for me, and I now feel the advantage of never having given up being out of doors as much as possible through all that sick time. Such a run of adventures as I had the day I came home! I had been panting for adventures all the time I was in Dublin, but it was all shockingly common-place there, but as soon as I started for home on Wednesday a cheerful variety began. First I fainted, or went as near it as I can do, shortly after starting from Dublin, and was restored by some ladies with brandy and Eau de Cologne. It was horribly close, hot and dusty till we turned past Limerick, and got the river air, which freshened me up the first sniff. As soon as ever I got home the boys insisted on my scrambling a bush to see a bird's nest. Then Tory and Raleigh got into an awful fight, and I had to separate them. Then Tory chased the cows, and

I had to chastise him; then the invalid chair got wrong. I had to get John to open it, and in doing so it fell together like a pair of scissors on my unlucky finger, and squashed the whole ball under the nail almost entirely off. I thought I should resume the fainting process, but wound it up in wet moss, and pulled through all right; but it was a horrid mash, and only for the invaluable remedy of wet moss I should have suffered an amount. The moss stops the blood and soothes the pain as nothing else does. Well, was not that enough for a homecoming, but we have not got to the end yet. Miss C. rushed in to say Amen was lying nearly dead in the bushes. We all tore up the cross walk, and sure enough there we saw Amen lying on his back in the top of a tree. Poor beast, he had lost his footing, rolled clean down the hill across the walk, and down into a dense mass of scrub strong enough to hold him up. He was not dead, however, and after a while three men managed to haul him up and get him on his legs. Whether he is seriously hurt we don't know yet, but he is very stiff, no doubt."

"Amen" died years later and had a successor in the ramshackle phaeton, which we called her "yellow chariot," She used to bring her carriage with her to Dublin—often driving all the way from Limerick in such a "jog jog journey" as is described in her essay. (She was indeed the only person I ever knew who really travelled in Ireland for pleasure. I have known Government inspectors, many of them, who travelled on business; I have known thousands of tourists in Ireland, Irish and English; but no other who did as she did, taking the only way to familiarise herself with the country as a whole.) Now, it happened that while driving she had the misfortune to knock down a small boy. By way of solace to

his feelings and his parents, she took the lad into her service: so began the career of Christy. I suppose she sent the pony home, for she purchased a tricycle as a means of getting from her house to ours; but, since her health was not strong, she made Christy accompany her as a running footman, and shove behind when she came to a hill. Not very unnaturally the cortège excited a good deal of comment, especially from the factory girls at Milltown.

Christy's end was arbitrary as his beginning. The room which my aunt inhabited at Woodville was double, and the fire was in the inner small return, which could only be approached through a doorway from the outer portion. It was her custom to fling herself down to rest wherever the humour took her—frequently on a rug near the fire. Now, Christy was under strict orders to keep the fire—a turf fire—always going, and coming up one afternoon he saw the fire all but extinct and his mistress's figure extended on a rug across the doorway—apparently asleep. He could not attract attention by sound, and I suppose that he was shy of disturbing her; besides, probably the course which he took appeared the most spirited way of dealing with the situation, for he cleared the obstacle with a flying leap. At that, the chieftainess in her wakened, and Christy was summarily dismissed—I fear unabashed, for my recollection is that he was unabashable.

She liked turf fires, because when she went to bed she could seize a couple of turf in the tongs and a couple more in the shovel and take her fire upstairs with her when she went to bed—a very disconcerting habit when one was staying in the house, for she retired about nine. In such matters she was very high-handed; she took what she wanted. We entertain memory of her setting out on one of her journeys for Limerick—early, of course—and calling in at my mother's house on the way. On the bar

which ought to have carried the phaeton reins (it did not much matter how her steeds were driven) was hung a huge straw hat, such as country women wear in the harvest field, carried against the chance of sun. She entered to us at breakfast, distributed large enveloping embraces, then with another bold and ample gesture swept to her all the provision of hot brown bread (our special glory), saying it would do for lunch; then cast a glance at the sideboard, spied grapes, swept them also, and, waving her goodbyes, deposited the whole on the front seat under the shadow of the straw hat.

In short, she carried to the extreme that practical communism which is so characteristic of Irish life. Her niece Mary tells me that at her last visit to Ardanoir no provision could be made for meeting her at the station, because one of the wheels off the trap had been lent to some one in the village. Neighbourliness could not go further; and it was reciprocal. On occasion she would mobilise the countryside—generally for a dog-hunt. Here is a note of one of these forays, jotted down by Miss Briscoe the companion and friend of her last years:—

"It was 'Cainos' that had got lost in a rabbit burrow." (This must have been the dog originally named 'Cionas tá tú'—How are you?—when Charlotte O'Brien was in the first stages of studying O'Growney's colloquial Irish.) "The whole house was turned out to search for her, and the large dinner bell was rung at intervals all over the place. We had been searching for the dog all day, and had come in tired out, but no trace could we get. About 9 o'clock we were told a policeman wanted to see Miss Charlotte. This was to tell her that he had heard a faint barking at the side of the cliff. We all turned out again, armed with shovels, furze cutters and lanterns, herself leading the way, and after scrambling about amongst

furze bushes and briars we at last located the burrow. All the village turned out to help to dig out the dog, and great was their delight and hers when they got him."

And, of course, as a part of the same social convention, or unconvention—this order rooted in disorder—any man or woman, boy or girl, of the clan had only to arrive and demand entertainment. Some place would be found for one to sleep in, something for one to eat (it was generally very little, for she ate little herself, and we always mocked at the appetites people came away with). But there was always the welcome, and abundance of flowers. You could depart laden with blossoms and plants as well; for, like all good Irish gardeners, she was lavish even of her treasures; and like all good Irish gardeners, when she visited a garden, she generally came provided with a basket to carry off slips, cuttings, stray roots, and so forth.

Cahirmoyle was, of course, the main object of her visits; but for many of the years in the eighties and nineties Cahirmoyle stood empty, "beautiful, homelike, but all, all alone," as she writes in a sad sonnet. Yet there were other homes of the clan: Mount Trenchard, Corgrig, Curragh, and above all the houses of her two brothers, Lucius and Donough. To the rectory at Adare, and, later, to the old Deanery at Limerick, she carried her quest for flowers and a welcome; but the happy hunting ground *par excellence* was her brother Donough's little house on a knoll above the Lax Weir, where there was another gardener as zealous as she. "They always had great colloguing over their different gardens," writes Miss Briscoe (in some notes kindly sent me), "and she would come back from his place laden with spoil in the way of plants, and would say: 'Come along and see what the good Donough has given me.'"

A very close friend of her's and his, and a skilled ally in their many botanising expeditions, was Miss Knowles, from the Dublin Museum of Science and Arts. I find some gay little doggerel addressed to her, a song of triumph over a prize missed by the expert :—

"See you not, O Matty mine,
How you walked and trotted
Right along the bridge o'er brine ;
Called from Rhobart, knight so fine,
Of the Normans, ancient line,
Yet you never spotted
Ononis
Arvensis, Miss,"

And so on.

The same bundle has a set of verses in lament for the departure of one—I know not which—in a series of superficially unattractive pets. One "Gruffy" is mentioned in the Cahirmoyle sonnets : the verses I am going to quote are dated Dec. 12, 1884 ; but I am sure there were other hedgehogs after this one, and all, I think, were banished upon the remonstrances of friends, as had happened when she wrote :—

"No more those pretty pattering feet
Shall scuttle forth in haste to greet
Thy tiny tray of rosy meat,
My Gruffy !

"No more thy black and beady eyes
Shall gaze on mine with fond surprise,
While grunting forth contented sighs,
My Gruffy ! "

The grammar is a trifle vague, it will be seen, but the description very accurate, and still more in this :—

> " No more thy faint and musky scent
> The public nostril shall resent,
> While angry eyes on thee are bent,
> My Gruffy ! "

My sister was the worst sufferer from this pet that I know of, for she happened to share a room with her aunt, and was disturbed by the creature's noise and prowlings ; yet the matches were across the room, and in going to look for them she might step, barefooted, on Gruffy. But when Charlotte O'Brien came to stay in the house of any of her kin, some animal always came with her, and if they were troublesome they were always amusing.

Another thing very characteristic was her dealing in houses. She rented Woodville by the year, and she used to sublet it. There, very often, she would be the paying guest of her own tenants, who were always friends ; and we used to assert, very probably with justice, that even under these conditions she carried off the turf fire at night to bed with her. But Woodville did not satisfy her ambitions, and she decided to build, a little way out of Dublin, close to a station on the line which had Miltown station near our house. Foxrock was then a place of whins and stone ; but her shrewdness guided her well, and the little house is now in a populous neighbourhood. " Failte " she called it, that is " Welcome."

Unluckily almost as soon as " Failte " was built my parents decided, for the first time in a married life of nearly forty years, to change their abode voluntarily—for reasons of health ; and she complained vehemently of their unsettled habits. The result was that " Failte " was little

occupied by her, and after a few years she sold it to the friend who had been its most frequent tenant.

Her enterprising ways seldom involved her in a loss: there was always a practical sagacity in her doings. At the same time she had not the type of mind which persists in one pursuit. She took up things—apart from her public work, which, unquestionably, she put through—for the amusement of trying them. Thus, in the first year after she had given up the emigration business and settled permanently at Ardanoir, she set her hand to growing daffodils for sale, finding that the soil and climate suited them to perfection. But this commerce was soon abandoned: all that stayed with her was the delight of the flowers, and sometimes the literary impulse to tell of that delight. Her essay on the daffodils, to me a very charming piece of prose, was one of a series contributed in 1898 to the *Irish Homestead*; and to each of them she appended verses of her own—sometimes new, sometimes already published. All of these papers show how strong a stamp had been set upon her mind by that study of scientific books which, especially in her early life, had gone hand in hand with minute observation of living nature. It stamps her imagination when she figures London as some huge polyzoic animal with separate cell life; it informs her thought, notably in all her speculation upon the relations of the sexes; it guides and illuminates her observation, as in her vivid picture of Ireland's central low-lying plain. And like every other acquired element in her mind, its history is bound up with droll recollections. One of these goes back to a far off past, before my school days, when she was with us in Donegal, and her passion of the moment was for skulls. She wanted a type of the pure Celtic skull, and she was convinced (very justly) that no purer Celtic stock could be found in Ireland than that of the

Irish-speaking mountaineers on the slopes of Lough Salt, one of whose daughters was a servant in our house—a black-haired, comely girl, with a sharp tongue and a turn for making verses. My aunt besought this girl many times to get her by hook or by crook a skull from the graveyard where her people buried; it seemed an easy enough enterprise to her own mind, for near Foynes was a crowded burying place, where all parts of the human anatomy lay about in indecent profusion. I have never seen the like in Donegal, and Mary Ann M'Gettigan refused to hear of the proposal. But one day she had done something which roused Miss Charlotte to just anger, and it was necessary to propitiate her. Mary Ann came voluble in entreaty. "Ah, Miss Charlotte, dear, don't be put out with me, sure I'll let you have my skull when I'm dead."

For the last ten years of her life I have few documents. She wrote little: the only verse I have of that period is the "Common Place Ballad," dated 1904. Of private letters there were few, I fancy; her health disinclined her for correspondence. Yet here is one to Douglas Hyde, to whom she wrote perhaps oftener than to any other friend:—

"Dear Douglas,—

"Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday I do be running. Sunday I sit down and turn over my week's letters. Wherefore I have not yet thanked you for your little prose poem. I have not yet had time to spell out the Irish, but have been through the trans. It has a tenderness also that gains on the second reading. When one has taken in the form in the first reading one is freer to observe the more hidden beauty. I hope the poor woman for whom the vote was requested may succeed. The downfall of the old ancient families is tragical,

though well earned very, very often. How I wish the men who are taking their places, the strong farmers, had a decent education. The houses and places are passing into the hands of new men, decent fellows, many of them, but not possible in society. If only the University question were settled! I have always thought the three colleges—one university the only plan that would break the frightful bar between the religions. Well, now, when I was in Dublin, being a R. C. myself, I desired to make friends amongst them. I could not, because I was in a Protestant clique. One can't get at them. Here you can't from different social status. Even the priests will hardly venture, except an odd one like Father O'Kennedy; and what a charming man he is, with all the Irish charm, education and the knowledge of the rich and poor from within, not outside. I think you met him. He is here every month or so, and all Ireland is talked out that same time."

That marks her constant preoccupation with the public life of the country. Other letters to him have reference to her own distractions. She was busy collecting riddles and inventing riddles, which she proposed to make a book of, and he was to add a Gaelic collection. This book was to be illustrated by her, for she drew ceaselessly, but without success: she would never learn the grammar of it. Yet in her sketches of animals one feels her keen perception of their individual character and life.

In her study of Irish, about which she wrote much to Hyde, there was the same impatience of method: she wanted to arrive direct at the literature without really learning the language. But it was a source of constant interest and pleasure to her, and some notes which Miss Briscoe has jotted down concern themselves again and

again with activities belonging to the Gaelic League. I give these memories in Miss Briscoe's own words :—

" 'Peggy, you ought to learn Irish: if you do I am sure I could help you through the first part, for I know a little share.' I was delighted, and many a pleasant hour we had after that. She was what she would call a great one for 'hurrishing you up,' and many a hurrishing I got from her over those same lessons. Thinking over them now, I wonder at the extraordinary patience and trouble that she took with me, for I was a stupid pupil. She always used to say: 'Well, I dragged you through the drudgery part anyway, and set you afloat.'

" Our lessons were conducted in rather a quaint fashion, for they were varied with all sorts of stories of the past as well as the present time. I had to write every word of whatever exercise we were doing, and then she would read a simple story, her finger pointing out the words as she read, stopping every now and then to tell some little funny thing that had happened in her recollection.

" When I started learning dancing she would come and watch with the greatest amusement my efforts at the rising step, and comment very freely on the way I held myself. Afterwards, when I was able to dance myself, I used to teach a children's class, and had them up at the house, and she always came down to see them, as she expressed it, 'put through their paces.' When the class would be over she would fly off and waylay the children as they passed out and present them with an apple or a cake."

Here now is an account of her last public appearance. The Gaelic League was arranging for an *aeridheacht* (that is, an " airing," an open-air gathering) at Abbey-

feale, in the parish of Father Casey, best beloved of Nationalist priests in County Limerick. Miss Briscoe belonged, of course, to the Foynes Branch of the League, and she writes :—

"*July*, 1905.

"I had come in very disappointed from the committee meeting, for the arrangements to go to the *aeridheacht* at Abbeyfeale had fallen through; my first thought, of course, was to talk it all over with her. She had gone to bed, but not to sleep, for that was not possible till she had heard all the business that went on at our meetings. She must know all the little bits of fun, the little disputes and discussions that went on, and she always had something to say as to how they should be dealt with. Well, this night she was all awake, wanting to hear everything at once; she had half promised to go with us herself, so, of course, was wanting to know the arrangements.

"Very disgusted she was at the dismal tale I had to tell. She listened in silence, then suddenly said—'You are fearfully disappointed, aren't you, Peggy? What would you say to our just going off on our own hook, taking Taylor and the pony.' I need hardly say that my heart jumped at the thought. We started planning it all, sheitting up in her bed, with her blue eyes twinkling, I sitting on the edge of the bed. 'Well, trot down and see if you can coax Taylor into staying away a night from the little Mrs., and come back and tell me.' Off I went, knowing that the great Anselm would only be jumping with joy at the thoughts of a visit to his beloved Father Casey.

"Well, to make a long story short, Taylor was game, so back I came to her with the news. She listened, and then said—'Well, I see no reason why we should not go. Call me at 7, and tell Taylor to be ready at 8 30

in the morning. See that the pony has a good feed of oats, and make up a bag of provisions to help us on the way.'

"Call her at 7! Indeed she was up at 6 without being called at all, and full of excitement over the expedition.

"We started, taking her beloved 'Boss' with us, snugly tucked in at her feet. She was just as full of excitement and fun as myself. Our provisions consisted of two large brown cakes, a piece of cold bacon, and about two dozen new potatoes, and Keating's 'History of Ireland' laid carefully on top. After a lot of bustle and fuss, we at last got off, and then, as usual, she kept up a running conversation about the different places as we passed them. We drove right up into the hills and made straight for the Kerry line, which she was anxious to see, as it was rather an unknown corner to her. As we neared Athea she said—'My soul desires lunch, so we'll stop and rest at the first decent little place we come to.' The house we pitched on was a small little shop at the far end of the town, and the *bean a tighe* was a stout, pleasant-looking dame. We ordered bacon (some of our own), eggs and tea, and the new potatoes.

"After a substantial meal and a rest, off we went again, and after driving for about two hours, we came at last to Abbeyfeale. The place was all decorated with flags and arches. She said—'Now, I am too tired, so will rest at the hotel, and you go on to the *aeridheacht*.'

"I left her resting, and went off. First thing I knew was that I was being hauled up on the platform, which seemed to be lined with black-coated figures, one of whom, after welcoming me in very hearty fashion, asked where was Miss Charlotte. I told him. The minute he heard it he disappeared, and in about ten minutes I saw him dragging her after him up the steps of the

platform. Such a reception as she got. There were over 5,000 people present—and they did cheer. She must make a speech, Father Casey said. She said—'All right, lead on, I am ready.' And then she began. It wasn't a speech, but just a little straight talk from her heart."

According to the report I heard from another witness, she stood up on the platform, and when the cheers subsided, she said :—"I see caps, a whole sea of caps. How many of those caps are Irish made ?" Then she put her hand to her own straw hat. "This is an Irish-made hat I have on me.—How many of you have on Irish-made coats ? This (touching her big mantle) is a Galway cloak I have on me—How many Irish-made boots are there in that fine crowd ? (Then, sticking out her leg, as I was told, and holding on to Father Casey to steady herself). "And these are Irish boots and stockings I have on me."

Naturally they cheered her to the echo, and, says Miss Briscoe, "when we got to the hotel, she said, with a funny little smile—'Well, Peggy, don't you think the old woman has done enough for to-day ?'"

"Old woman, indeed," her friend adds. "Her body may have been feeble, but her heart was not."

And again :—

"If there was a children's party, she entered into all the fun with them. One time I remember getting up a bran dip, and she insisted on being allowed to dip too. And the excitement she got into over the things she fished up !

"Such a large, generous heart as she had, and so full of sympathy about everything—no matter how small the thing, you were always sure of her taking an interest in it.

"She just loved to hear all the little village excitements and doings, and used to call me 'her newspaper.' Whenever I went away, when I would come back—first thing—she wanted all the news of Dublin and elsewhere. Next question then would be—'Well, what pretty didoes have you picked up?' When my tale had been told, then she would tell all that had gone on while I was away.

"The settling of the flowers in the drawingroom was always a great performance with her to welcome people. 'Somebody coming—the flowers must be settled fresh.' And glorious masses of colour she used to have on that mantel-piece.

"On most fine evenings she used to sally forth just about dusk with her skirt tucked over her arm to hunt for slugs, or, as she used to say, 'looking for the enemy.'

"One time she was looking for a gardener, having, as she expressed it, 'fallen foul of Dan.' She engaged a man from ——. He arrived on the day settled, and after interviewing him, she told him to walk round and see the place, and then to come back and have his supper. He went off, but did not turn up until sometime about midnight, and then very much the worse for drink. He kicked up a row and refused to go to bed or even stay in the house—said he must get a bed in the best hotel. She dressed herself (having gone to bed) and came down, looked at him, said—'All right, follow me and I'll get it for you.' Away with her, armed with a stick and a lantern, followed by this man. She marched straight down to the barrack, knocked at the door till she roused the guard, told them this man wanted the best hotel in the place, and that she had come to them. They closed round him, and soon lodged him all right. Home with her then, and back to bed. Next morning she bought a single ticket to ——, and got the police to see him back to his native soil again.

The East Garden at Ardanoir, Foynes.

"The country people loved her. And when we would go driving through the country she had a smile and a merry word for them all as they passed."

These were her occupations, this was her life during those last years. All this must be set off against the desperately tragic utterance of that essay upon the isolation of deafness which I found among her papers—written somewhere about 1892. That stands for what she conquered, what she lived down.

After all, nothing gives a truer picture of the woman than the series of papers which she contributed to *Irish Gardening* in this very year, the last year of her life. From January to June the readers of that little magazine heard of "The Making of Our Home," and among all the practical details, gardeners' hints and improvisations, they had many glimpses of that mind, beautiful in its final serenity. She was writing from month to month, and June had its instalment. July brought only the notice of her death.

The end came very suddenly. Her health had lately given great uneasiness to her kinsfolk, but she refused to see a doctor. At last, her nephew, Dermod O'Brien of Cahirmoyle, went down to Foynes, bringing with him Dr. Fogarty from Limerick, on the plea of a visit of friendship.

Once there, Dr. Fogarty got leave to make an examination, and discovered that she had not a week to live. The two men went down to Foynes to telegraph to her kin, and came back to the house after an hour's absence. In that interval she had died in the arms of her friend, Miss Briscoe.

The funeral took place on the Sunday. Many of her kindred, I among them, who would have wished to be present, did not hear the news in time to reach Foynes

that day. But there was a huge concourse of the truest and most fitting mourners, "her own people," among whom she dwelt.

At the morning Mass in the little Foynes Chapel, Father O'Kennedy preached, and he has written down for this book what he said :—

"Brethren, I ask your prayers for the repose of the soul of Miss O'Brien. I need not tell you how kind and good she was; you know it. I need not tell you how noble; that too you know. I would speak rather about that little corner of the altar rails there. Catholics believe that at the altar rails they receive the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. For twenty years and more she knelt at that little corner of the altar rails. For these twenty years it was my privilege to minister to her, and oh, the reverence of that uplifted face! Oh, the humility of that uplifted face! Oh, the faith of that poor uplifted face! It always seemed to me to say—'Go thou, priest, and do likewise.' My work here is now at end; it was for her alone, as you know, that I used to come here. She is gone, and there is no more need of me; but this Church will be during my life solemn and blessed to me, and that little corner of the altar rails the dearest and holiest spot on earth."

She was carried to the high windy graveyard of Knockpatrick, as her wish had been. Here is her own description of it, written in 1890 :—

"That's the place for me: grand. The wind was sweeping up from the Atlantic, the sky was heavy with broken clouds, the mid air bearing uncertain drifts of rain, the river grim and wild, the Fergus desolate and

grey, the bogland black, and a big heap of human bones at my feet. My! how weird it looked. The grandest place in this world to my individuality; may my grave be there, and no other earth hold my bones."

She sleeps there now, in the place of her own choice, overlooking the Shannon, which she loved; and surely her grave is not without honour.

Two things remain to be done—to give here, briefly, her final views, so far as I can gather them, upon the question of emigration; and, secondly, to take into account her work as a writer.

Here is, first, the impression which she derived from her first lookings about her in New York—a two-sided impression reinforced in both its aspects by wider experience. She said to an interviewer:—

"I have been to your free schools and the Normal College, and I have not seen one child that in Ireland we would call perfectly healthy. Whether it was due to the climate or whatever, they were pallid and delicate-looking. As to your tenement house system, it seems to me to be as miserable a system as it is possible to conceive. I did not happen to visit a single family that had not lost most of the children it had ever had. One does not wonder when one sees the sleeping rooms, with their poisonous atmosphere, all opening into one common apartment. But on the other hand, I have seen people who at home in Ireland were living in cabins at the road-sides along with pigs, and who at home, if you put them in the best house in Ireland, would have made it intolerable in a short time, living now in real comfort, having nice drawingrooms and everything neat and clean, in tenement houses. A reform of manners is effected by

the transportation to America so great that I never could have believed it if I had not actually met with people whose lives at home I have followed from their earliest childhood. I have here a picture of a girl that grew up in a cabin by my father's gate—the whole family in one apartment. See, she is better dressed than I am. She has a nice home, with lace curtains and pretty and comfortable apartments, and has the manners of a lady. I never could have believed it if I had not seen it. I went, however, into one of those houses across the street, where I saw a score of almost naked children, and every evil of miserable life in Ireland intensified."

And here is the result of her deeper meditation as expressed in a curiously incoherent, but none the less characteristic, manuscript essay which I can date only by the fact that the tickets of the Irish National Co-operative Society, Irish House, Dublin, on whose backs or faces it is written, bear the figures 188—. It is called "The Espousals and the Loves and the Courtships of Ulster," and it begins by recounting the story of Buaichne and Bualah, two lovers who died suddenly on hearing—the first a false, and the second a true report—of each other's death, and from whose graves trees sprang and blended their branches. And after long years the yew tree of Buaichne and the apple tree of Bualah came to be felled, and tablets were made of them on which to write the loves of Ulster. But as the King held those tablets, one in his right hand and the other in his left, suddenly they sprang together, and no man could separate them for ever after.

And on that text Charlotte O'Brien moralises on the separation of lovers:—

"It is the tearing apart of the tablets, the very sub-

stance of each is injured. I think, I have thought often, of the hidden suffering our emigration has meant during the last forty years: the mothers doomed to lose child after child, the lovers separated, the fathers going down to the grave, their grey hairs unhonoured and unwept for; every sacred relation of life broken into and torn to pieces by this passion of wandering—for that it is. It is well to say, money and work will keep the young at home. It is not true. We all know how the young insist on going, even when they have little to look to abroad, and have good work at home. It is the flight of the swallows, the flying instinct, which, once developed in a nation, can, perhaps, never be laid. Money and work at home will bring people back; it will not prevent the young from going. It is not desirable it should. How minds stagnate that never move! Is not the emigration a national education growing deeper into the soul of our people than their school learning? I think it is a much more important education in many ways, for it awakens the mind, it brings a larger range of thought, it gives an outlet to talents, and, perhaps, more than anything else, it will in time give the Irish people the free use of their own minds and consciences.

"Does it or does it not loosen the bonds of affection? I am sure that it does not with maternal love, for the mother's love clings the more tightly to that which it may lose and must lose; for other ties, I think it may induce some hardening. But, except when an entirely artificial civilization and education stunts natural growth, Nature will always reassert itself. The kingdom of love is not so easily shaken."

As a writer it must be said, broadly speaking, that she failed, and failed because she never tried hard enough. She was too busy living to concentrate her powers on the

special task of bringing an art to its completeness. The dramatic gift, the power of interpreting and displaying motives, she had not; in her one novel no character stands out. In her verse I find real excellence only when she worked with a metre which imposed upon her a rigid form. The looser lyrics have their charm and their grace, but I find her distinctive and individual character only in the sonnets, and in that poem upon deafness, which is a stanza answering to the sestet of a sonnet.

Once or twice in the Cahirmoyle series she played tricks with the rigid convention, giving the sonnet a trochaic movement to suggest the scythe's swish or the swing's flight, and I do not dislike the result, though it shocked her friend and critic, Aubrey de Vere, who wrote her an interesting letter thereanent.

I should complain rather of the want of finish which is found in not a few, even of those which I feel justified in including. Obscurities are left, arising from no subtlety of thought, but simply from inadequacy of expression. Yet again and again one finds her moving with surprising freedom in that difficult measure to which she set again and again the very cry of her heart.

At its best, her work may be fittingly compared with that of Aubrey de Vere; it has the same classic dignity, the same noble simplicity, and utter avoidance of jargon. Her verse, even at its best, is certainly less accomplished than his; yet I do not know but it has more of the essential stuff of poetry in it.

There remains her prose work, part of it done in the higher regions of journalism; and the two essays published in the *Nineteenth Century* are as vigorous and direct in their expression as the work of the best journalists. Another phase of her style is shown in the thoughts on deafness, vehement Brontësque outpourings: and of such there is a good deal among her unpublished papers,

though none else so poignant. Lastly, there is the work of her maturer age in the essays here gathered together, of which the first and simplest is her delightful account of her pet birds. That was written in 1886. The papers of 1898—"Shanid Castle," for instance—show a vastly developed command of her medium. And in the last of all that she ever wrote there is a passage which for beauty and dignity and sweetness, for large and mellow utterance, may be set beside anything in the work of any writer of our day. It has the true accent of greatness: her whole nature speaks there.

It may, indeed, come to pass, as she predicts in it, that the choice briars and daffodils which she made to grow wild on the hillside above her home will renew their blossoms to a time when they shall "scent the bloomy air" for a generation that knows not her memory; it may be that her name and her work will be forgotten. She had no personal ambition to be remembered except in love; and in love she will surely be cherished till the youngest generation that knew her has passed away. Yet I think that some of her poems and some also of these essays will survive, as good things do, in the volumes of gleanings which are, perhaps, the most companionable of books. Few writers can hope for more; many who attain notoriety and wealth have no chance of that survival.

But about her more than about any person of public note whom I have known, the important thing was, not what she did but what she was. Boyle O'Reilly, no mean judge, speaking out of the widest experience, wrote of her to her cousin Professor Stockley:—

"If she has mentioned me at all, I am highly honoured and deeply gratified. I admire and esteem her almost

above anyone I have ever known. Her existence, her sweet, unselfish, brave womanly individuality is a touch-stone for noble lives, a reproof to little and mean desires."

The devil's advocate could easily point out, in her character and career, foibles and faults—follies, rather—which caused grief to others and most of all to herself. But a true portraiture would show, I think, two chief excellencies—a nature unstunted by an infirmity which went to the very core of life, and a passionate love of her country with a sense of kinship with its poorest people. She was proud of her descent, proud of her father, and that pride made her the life-long champion and friend and servant of the poor. I find little in her poems more characteristic than this verse, which, as it first appeared made part of the verses on Brian Boroimhe's harp * :—

> "O father of my father's ancient race,
> Thy blood, thy life is mine, and thine my strength
> Founded upon thy people ; mine the place,
> Won, father ! by thy sad, lost life at length."

Her father, representing a stock with whom leadership of a county was hereditary from time out of mind, was accepted as a National leader very largely by reasons of this historic background which appealed to his sentiment and that of the nation. Under that inspiration he made the ultimate sacrifice, risking all that a man can risk ; and he earned devotion. She, when the need came for her to step forward in the service of her country, appealed to that devotion with confident authority, as representing not him alone, but all the past that he stood for—counting as any chieftainess might do on the trust of her people, and feeling herself pledged by it to make return. "Spend me and defend me," says

* Printed after the essay on "Shanid."

the Irish proverb. All the rents she drew from them were dues of honour and of love; and in return for these she gave to her clan and her country a shining example of real patriotism which cherished alike Ireland's past and its present—alike the physical beauty of hills and plains and streams and seas, and the inner beauty of Ireland's very soul. She had that seeing eye which pierces past superficial defects to the very core of things: and, so seeing, she loved and trusted her countrymen. For herself, for her own life, she was despondent often; but in all her writings I find no hint of anything but hope and confidence for Ireland.

END OF THE MEMOIR

POEMS

Charlotte O'Brien published three volumes of verse: A Drama and Lyrics, *1880, dedicated "To the Memory of Charles Murrough O'Brien.* Lyrics, *1886, dedicated thus—"To my dear Brothers and Sisters, to their Children, who are my children, this book is given by one who loves them"; and* "Cahirmoyle or the Old Home," *which has this inscription—"To all who love simple and true things I commend this little book, hoping they also will commend and recommend it," I print the whole Cahirmoyle series. The following are from manuscript:*—Dromoland, Winter, Song (Bend, O Bend), Sonnet on the Sonnet, To Mary, 1868, Sonnet to Charles Murrough O'Brien, Convalescence, A Shannon Sabbath Evening, A Commonplace Ballad, and Innisfail. *All these except* Winter *were written after 1887.*

Poems

CAHIRMOYLE

Not altogether for their own delight
The dear fields of our childhood's memory
Are sacred to us above all we see;
We dream them clad in loveliest green, and dight
With sweetest wild flowers to make glad our sight,
While the deep hedgerows are alive with glee
Of life now wrapped in silent secrecy,
And all the heavens above are realms of light.
Again we wander through the self-same ways,
'Neath the same heavens, and even the flowers are there;
But, ah! how much is gone, how cold and bare
And changed is all we loved in those far days!
Gazing sad-eyed o'er earth's so beauteous store,
The heart shrinks back and feels its love-loss more.

THE OLD GARDEN

Rich with warm scents that the all-mastering sun
Draws to himself from grass and flowers and trees,
From deep moss-rose beds and sweet clustering peas,
From all the lovely life he shines upon,
Was that warm corner where, when work was done,
Beneath great limes—mere living towers of bees—
My mother sat, while round about her knees
Romped boys and girls and dogs in wildest fun.
What beds of stocks were there, what mignonette
With endless store of flowers! and near the wall
What ranks and masses of white lilies met!
And O! what hollyhocks! stately, rich and tall!
They are gone, and so are we, but from my heart
Those lovely old-world scenes shall ne'er depart.

Poems

THE HOUSE

That dear old brown house with its ivied keep
Haunted by ghosts and grim and dismal tales,
The home of countless birds and bats and snails,
And ghastly unaccomplished sounds that steep
In dread delight young hearts too proud to weep!
There in the autumn eve when twilight fails,
And ivy boughs toss to the soughing gales,
From mouth to mouth old stories banish sleep:
The red lips chill, but cry for more and more,
And through the leaves the rain-drops sob and pour:
A sound goes creeping through the hollowed walls;
It moans and weeps—then dreadful silence falls,
And through dark ways with swift and fearful tread,
And startled eyes, the young ones haste to bed.

THE NURSERY

Death on the white horse, near a stately knight
Clad all in steel, his lean hound at his feet,
The mocking fiend hard by—were these things meet
For childish eyes? Yes, Sintram in his might,
His armoured horse, his strong spear held upright,
His eyes set ever forward to complete
Some deed heroic, some world-honoured feat,
Filled us with sober awe and vague delight.
Those little wooden cots with tented heads,
Yellow and black, a painted, pillared show,
Held many pondering thoughts when lights
burned low,
When the old servants murmured near our beds,
The red turf glimmered, and the kettle, higher
And yet more high, sang its song to the fire.

Poems

THE CHERRY

Not whiter were the snow flakes as they flew
From chill December clouds so cold and grey,
Than were those snowy drifts of bloom that lay
On the old ivied cherry, all anew
Decked for the gay spring and the heavens blue.
Nestled within its sheltering arms all day,
All the long shining hours the children play,
And prize its scattered fruits though small and few.
The branches now are lichen-clad and dry,
Its flowers scarcer as the years roll by,
But the strong ivy waves its crested head
(Ah! brave companion of the tombéd dead),
And glories in the strength of the wild breeze
That racks and rends amid the ancient trees.

THE OLD ROOKERY

" Yes, miss, an' sure my father often tould
" Of thim that lived in the great house, and how
" The wild swine ran just where ye're standing now,
" In the old crow wood; 'twas tangled then, and ould
" And full of scrub and thorns and miry mould,
" They were all for drinking then, and, faix! ye know
" 'Twas blow for word with them, and blood for blow,
" And thim that lived above were bad and bould;
" They'd come with guns and dogs, there where ye
stood,
" To shoot the wild swine in the old crow wood—
" Thim Whelans—they're all dead, and no loss too.
" But see! my day is gone discoursing you!
" Work a drass, miss, rest a drass, pray a drass,
" 'Tis that way the Lord wills the day to pass."

Poems

THE WELL

The old wood well—beautiful, full and clear,
Deep, brimming, bosomed in its own green nest,
With flickering sunny woodlights fairly dressed
In garlanded profusion brown and sere
And grey and gold, there in their watery bier
Autumn's late glories linger to their rest,
While fresh green leaflets on its glassy breast,
Speak of the summer winds, so near, so dear.
Ah! bounteous fountain in thy full o'erflowing,
Thou hast seen the ancient life, its strength and mirth,
Its slow decay, and thou hast seen the sowing
Of those strange thoughts that now perplex the earth;
They come and pass, even as a human tone,
Fleeting and warm o'er thee and thy grey stone.

THE HAY-FIELD

Gaily through the meadows rich and dry
Goes the sharp scythe, swishing long and loud.
Girls and merry boys clustered in a crowd
Are tossing, tossing, tossing up on high
The rich, sweet-scented green swathes where they lie.
The hot sun is regnant, and the bowed
Great arch of heaven fleckless of a cloud,
And the sweating mowers cast their garments by.
But, hark! sweet voices, clear and pure and young,
Sing the dear songs of Erin and of home,
Sing of the loved ones far across the foam,
Sing the old notes to which the old hearts clung,
Old hearts, old heads, there bending, worn and grey,
Twisting sougawns from forth the scented hay.

THE STUDY

A quaint old room—recesses deep and dark,
Well lined with books not for their bindings dear,
But for their inner voices sweet and clear
As is the note of the sun-tranced lark.
There we rejoiced o'er the world famed clerk
Shouting "Prodigious," or the jovial cheer
Of Athelstane fresh from his gloomy bier,
Still wrapt in ghastly death-weeds grim and stark.
Beside the homely fire of turf and wood
Young voices roll the "Lays of Ancient Rome,"
Or on the floor with heads together bowed
Follow the tale of each old pictured tome;
While from the starry clematis peeps in
The blue tit, missing the accustomed din.

THE DRAWING-ROOM

Oh! what a flood of summer sunshine poured
Through that small homely room from door to door,
Casting strong shadows o'er the creaking floor;
A floor so old and full of holes, we deemed
That treasure-hoards beneath our footsteps teemed.
This was the place from whence the miser's store
Had once been drawn—and what had been before
Might be again, or so to us it seemed.
But we had treasures there more good than gold—
Treasures of youth, of love, of trust untold,
Of health unbroken and of happy hours,
Of sweet blush-roses and brave winter flowers;
Jasmine and myrtle were our chief estate,
Our gold was little but our peace was great.

THE SCHOOL-ROOM

The miser in his suit of snuffy brown,
His short knee breeches and his buckled sheen,
In the full glare of mid-day, late was seen
In the inner room from which yon stair comes down
Straight into this. Aye! let the music drown
Those sounds that moan from out the ivied, green
And ancient tower, where dreadful things have
been.
Hard by in the vaulted room of fell renown,
Often and often on yon window ledge
I have sat, with slate in hand and eyes alert,
Watching the swallows on the long roof edge,
Watching the wagtails and the sparrows pert,
Watching the great rats hobbling to their feast,
—The varied yard-life of man, bird, and beast.

THE BIRDS.

Carolling, carolling to greet the warm spring day
In the early morn amid the shining dew,
Or when evenings flush over heavens blue,
The merry birds are singing all so gay:
The blackbird's whistling thrill, the thrushes grey,
The linnet's softer song, the far cuckoo,
The bullfinch, and the goldfinch, and the robin true,
Sweet music lost to me for aye!
To me the hidden nests were then revealed,
I saw the tender leaflets gently stirred,
The lovely goldfinch-home was not concealed,
Where corn-crakes lay, I fed the soft shy bird,
I tracked the brown wrens to their winter rest,
And stroked the bullfinch mother on her nest.

THE PARLOUR

No fine new-fangled words held us in awe,
This was our "Parlour," and no other name
Would suit for it however grand its claim:
Round that long table many a busy jaw,
And merry mouth, and brown beseeching paw,
Would find a place—then spirits none could tame
O'er the old chairs raced round in boisterous game,
Or kneeling learnt the forfeit-ruler's law.
Here oft the household gathered, old and young,
To cut and pulp the orange rind of gold,
My mother reading with unwearied tongue
Of the brave tales and the brave deeds of old,
While 'neath the window, with impatient bark,
Old Seal shouts loud, "Come out ere it be dark."

THE TENANTS' BALL

Ours no ancestral halls wherein to greet
Our friendly neighbours—only welcomes fraught
With loving memories and true kindly thought;
The long lofts measured to the clanging feet,
The old walls bounded to the fiddle's beat,
The buxom girls from hand to hand were caught,
Youth and old age for jigging honours fought,
Till "Haste to the Wedding" sounded a retreat.
Then little cobwebbed windows wide were thrown,
Framing with light full many a fair young face,
O'er which sweet rose buds by the warm winds blown
Were scarcely noticed for their own bright grace—
But for the forehead they have dared to touch,
But for the tender words that mean so much.

THE HORSE CHESTNUT

Sweeping down with lovely rose-white spires
crowned,
Sweeping down to mother earth, and then again
With curvéd, carvéd, leaflets in their train,
Up and up the branches go, from the ground.
The hot beams enter not the mighty round
Of that wide-browed leafy tent, nor the rain:
Only at the outer gates the winds complain,
Whispering, whispering, with low subduéd sound.
Within amid the branches strong and bare,
Each on his perch were gathered all our seven,
Knowing naught of death, or sorrow, or the heaven
Of a sweet wife's love and children fair—
Nought o the long pain of a healthless life,
Nought of the dread, hard, bitter need of strife.

OLD SEAL.

These shadows of our life which I have drawn
Come with sweet touches from my inmost heart,
Ah! what a tender, close and loving part
Hadst thou therein, dear Seal! The dewy dawn
Saw thy brown curly self upon the lawn,
Watching and waiting till the door should start,
Then to our arms triumphant thou wouldst dart,
Growling o'er us as o'er a bone half gnawn.
Often thy bounding love would overturn
Some heedless child—but thou wast very wise,
Thou readst our thoughts with thy brown tender eyes;
And I, who loved not learning, loved to learn
All thou couldst tell me, darling, when my tears
Dried on thy golden crest and silky ears.

ROVER

Of all we loved, dear Seal, best loved and best
Wert thou; but surely I must also tell
Of the dear little friend you loved so well,
Even to your death; in silky softness dressed,
Rover went with you on each winding quest
Of hedgehogs, through the grassy, bosky dell,
Or seeking up and down the hidden cell
Wherein the field-mouse twines its twisted nest.
He had funny ways, too, had our little Rover
Must come to evening prayers, then bask in clover
Till the last prayer began, then haste to cover
Of the old seat to drink his milk, then hover
From chair to chair to kiss each childish lover,
Jumping and shouting, "Prayers are nearly over!"

THE HEDGEHOGS

Of all the quaint, contrary, cranky things
Nature has made, sure hedgehogs are the worst;
And I should know—I who loved Gruff the First
And each succeeding Gruff that old Seal brings
Gingerly in her mouth, heedless of stings
From spiny armoured temper crossed and curst.
Oh, Gruffy! Gruffy! often have I nursed
And patted you—till back the forehead swings,
The jetty nose peeps out, the beady eyes,
Then the small ears, and then the black legs kick,
The head turns to and fro with grunting sighs,
Then sudden up my elbow, scuttling quick,
You scrambling go, and we all joyful hail
The lovely beast fulfilled from nose to tail.

Poems

THE SWING

As the white clouds, as the scattered white clouds lying
In the deep and cool recesses of the sky,
So we flew, up on high, up on high!
Fearing naught, but ever, ever trying
To emulate the wild birds in their flying
Up to the elm boughs and ash leaves nigh;
The grassy earth below is fleeting by,
With brothers pushing ever 'mid great crying.
Then voices mingling rise and sweep afar,
From where the slender ash trees slightly swaying,
Yield to the swinging rope's prolongéd jar,
And beneath and all round are children playing,
In the pure sweet happiness of heaven's air—
Thou, too, my brother, thou wert also there.

THE WAY TO CHURCH.

The unchanged charm of those sweet shady lanes
Still moves my heart, whene'er I pass the ways
Where thou and I, my brother, in old days,
Plucked the wild crab still wet with April rains,
Masses of tinted white with rose red stains.
There! there we leant! there where the ivy strays
From the old bridge, to where the sunshine plays
With the water rippling o'er its pebbly grains.
Now, while I think and think, a very maze
Of thoughts crowd in——See! there the hawthorn sways,
There the sweet primrose decks the grassy plains,
Bee-haunted cherries there in the hot sun rays
Are garbed in maiden snow, a veiling haze
Of burnished bloom where heaven's white light remains.

GLENVILLE

The shadows flicker on the coltsfoot sheaves:
There 'neath the bridge and o'er the sparkling
stream,
Often we traced the water's wavering gleam
Amid long trailing branches and green leaves;
Often we rested, where the beech tree weaves
A liquid web for every wandering beam
O'er deep dark pools wherein the old trout dream,
And oft a shining foot the water cleaves.
A stream o'ergrown and shadowed all its length,
From the fairy fort and glen, to the old bridge,
Bringing its amber waters from the strength
Of yonder brown, bare, boggy, heathery ridge,
To where the fat land's heavy-footed kine
In their rich beds of luscious green recline.

THE FARM

These paths of memory step by step retracing,
The lingering mind broods o'er each dear detail—
I watch again the ever-falling flail,
I watch the sunbeams to dark corners chasing
The flying golden grain for bright embracing,
I see the dim floor where the brown mice trail
Their heavy loads past many a cobwebbed nail,
The great grey spiders up the rafters racing.
I lie among the winter-storéd corn—
Or in deep nests of warm hay with the dogs:
I mark with mingled fear, delight, and scorn,
White-bellied rats among the deep-piled logs;
The frosty air is full of joyous sound,
And eager, hungry birds are crowding round.

COSHERING.

Where heavy-uddered herds were slowly treading,
A little lonely child I fearless went,
O'er great wide fields, past thorn trees gnarled and bent,
To the simple folk I loved in the old farm steading,
Beneath the ancient sycamores broad-spreading.
They loved me too, and often there I spent
Hour after hour unheeded and content,
My devious way from roost to dairy treading.
There sat the old wife by the chimney wide,
Her head still nodding—Why ? I knew not why :
The ever turning wheel went whirling by,
And oft to draw its thread in vain I tried,
And oft the patient cows in the grassy field
Some drops of milk to my soft hand would yield.

CHRISTMAS

Glittering and sparkling in the frosty air
Are the heavy boughs all laden with the snow ;
The deep green hollies and the laurels now
Even to the very ground white burdens bear.
Only the puffing robin redbreasts dare
To sing their little songs so soft and low,
While blackbirds, 'neath the great shrubs, to and fro
Toss sideways heaps of leaves, the insects' lair.
O ! gladly, gladly did we mark the fall
Of the soft feathery flakes that seldom came,
And merrily did we roll the gathering ball,
With the boys home once more, to make our game
So full and perfect we could rarely rest
From hugest laughter o'er each school-born jest.

Poems

THE FATHER

We led our life, a full and joyous life,
And knew but little of the world's deep grief,
Not even our own, though sad beyond belief—
A father driven both from child and wife,
And broken-hearted through his weary strife,
Outcast because he sought our land's relief,
Exiled from home with every branded thief,
Torn from his love and scarred by insult's knife.
Ah! Father, it was hard such lot to bear,
And well I mind when first I saw thy bowed
And seared grey head, bent low beneath a cloud
Of disappointment, silence, and despair.
Thy land lay in a trance, thou thought'st it dead,
And that deep sorrow aged thy downcast head

THE MOTHER

O'er all our lightsome life the watchful eye
Was still our mother's; ever gay and brave
She rose triumphant o'er grief's deepest wave.
Oh! think of her—her husband judged to die,
To death in its ghastliest form: but strong and high
She stood by that great heart to whom she clave,
Honouring the last and noblest word he gave,
When, death refused to him, exile drew nigh.
This was that faithful, true and high command—
"Leave me, my wife, go back to our estate,
"Back to our poor, home to our broken land,
"This is our first best duty, this your fate—
"And as for mine, God knowing what it may be,
"I leave my people and my sons to thee."

Poems

ABSENCE

Could I but see all that I loved once more,
The hidden fountains of the heart would spring
To welcome every little, uncared thing;
Each leaf, each nook, each stain upon the floor,
The deep-bowered jasmine clustering round the door,
The myrtle boughs that to the old walls cling,
And all the garden's bright and bounteous store.
But where the old house stood, there now stands one
Forsaken of all who love it, young and old,
Beautiful, home-like, but all, all alone,
While I am left to read the tale oft told,
Of wasted love, of sympathy unsought,
Of idle hands, and harsh bewildered thought.

DREAMS

Those hidden fountains on this sorrowing earth
Lie all forgotten, sealed, and buried deep:
But oft in the unguided hours of sleep
They wake the heart to sudden grief and mirth;
Then once again the new old things have birth,
Then the soul yearns, in one strong, passionate leap,
Embracing the lost dead, and heart-drops weep
In dim awakening consciousness of dearth.
O God! The heart is there, the loves are there,
Folded and laid aside, but safe and warm;
The very pulsing image of each form
Beats to our heart in the night watches bare;
And we, lying still in silent, seeming death,
Revel in golden youth's abounding breath.

THE WALNUT TREE

Even so in dreams I saw the walnut tree,
Its green-cased fruit, its grey and silvery bark,
With certain spots or streaks all black or dark,
I know not what—and straight there came to me
Such joy and strength of living youth and glee.
The very air upheld me, as a lark
Poised in the midmost heaven, and I could mark
Far off a chorus of sweet harmony.
Nor was I then alone, but as of yore
We sought the falling fruit in busy groups,
Or sent the shining sticks in flying troops
Up to the branches that rich promise wore;
And while on scented leaves the sunbeams gleamed,
Sudden I woke, and knew that I had dreamed.

THE STARS

If every picture of our long dead past
Rests in the framed light of our consciousness,
Even death's mysterious self may bring redress,
Giving to life all that it seems to blast,
Setting the strong caged spirit free at last,
Free to rejoin its love, free to express
Its very absolute self, nor more nor less,
With all the wealth by this worn body massed.
Sleep the Benumber gives us back our sight;
Death the Destroyer—what shall be thy gift?
O! once I thought each star a tiny rift
In the broad curtain drawn o'er heaven's light—
It seemed then strange and sad to hear the truth:
Now higher law gives back the dream of youth

Poems

FAREWELL

The titmice linger in those bosky lanes,
The beech trees shed their leaves along the streams,
And I can see again, as one who dreams,
The old house with its mossy, time-worn stains,
Its sloping walls, its ancient rainbowed panes,
The deep green tufts where the sweet primrose
gleams,
The glancing daffodil's gay golden beams,
And glittering shrubs bedewed with softest rains.
Even thus, throughout this weary, wintry moon,
My hours with wistful musings sweetly guiled,
I have forgot myself and been a child—
But now farewell, dear scenes, all, all too soon:
If worthless to all others, yet to me
These scattered verses some delight shall be.

DROMOLAND

Across the wastes of long-drawn years I gaze
On one bright hour when eve's bright sunshine
glowed
On thine high-towered beautiful abode,
Dromoland! There I see thy pleasant ways,
Thy terraced walks, and above all a blaze
Of light-stemmed double poppies thickly sowed,
On which old Mother Nature had bestowed
A very wealth of white and rosy rays.
My little skirt I held before me straight
To catch those dainty flowers as they were
thrown
To me in handfuls by a dame of state,
Who, when their lovely petals were full-blown,
Drew from their juices the Lethean stream
To hide harsh pain in some bewitching dream.

Poems

TO MARY O'BRIEN—1864

When grief around me her sad watches kept,
'Mid sorrow, doubt, and fear, I came to thee,
Nor knew thee. But thy keen-eyed sympathy
Looked down into my heart and saw where slept
Shadows of jealous love and tears unwept:
Then with thyself thou didst encompass me,
Drawing me ever nearer tenderly,
Till the full flood of thy rich loving swept
Across my heart, and doubt was calmed to rest.
Mary, in vain I long for words to speak
Of all the loving thought hid in thy breast:
'Tis not forgotten. Though my life be weak,
I follow in the dusk where thou hadst light,
And strive, holding thine hand, near thee to fight.

1872–1884.

MARY—HYERES, 1866

Beneath the shadow of grey branched planes
Our Mary sat and rested; near her feet,
With small clasped hands, o'erbrimmed with bunches sweet
Of daisy buds, her child, her Nell remains,
Or with quick bound some bright, strange flower attains;
Then, weary with her joy and southern heat,
She flings herself awhile down by our seat—
But for a moment; now each nerve she strains
To catch those sun-stained leaves which on the bough
Waver around her head, now high, now low.
Her rose-bound hat, fallen back from off her brow,
Shows all her face, flushed bright as flowers that blow
In summer's fulness; and her mother's eyes
Are soft and still, as one love satisfies.

1872.

MARY—1867

If in the hopeless night or weary day
I long for rest of sympathising eyes,
That rest of love wherein all comfort lies;
Then, Mary, then I see the flowery way
By which you came—there shadowed sunbeams sway,
And toss or float 'mid olive leaves above.
Silent you came, stretching forth hands of love,
Tearless, but flushed, and in your brown eyes lay
Deep, boundless pity to assuage my grief.
Silent you drew me, as a child, to rest,
Close to your circling arms and sobbing breast,
Even through your sorrow giving mine relief.
Oh! sister, dearest love, I mourn thee still,
Though long, long since we kissed our last farewell.

1872.

TO THE BUST OF MARY O'BRIEN—1868

Pure, bright, and calm art thou as spirits blest:
Semblance of her I loved, of her most dear;
Thee neither sin, nor sorrow, nor any fear
Of death hath stained; rather triumphant rest
And joy unknown unspeakable, exprest
Silently by each line tender and pure
Of shaded eyes, or curved chin rounded clear,
Or folded lips—ah! sweet lips often prest
To mine: but never more, oh! never shall I touch
Thy fair head with its dusky, gold-streaked cloud,
Whereon light lingered, till it seemed that such
Should be its own first home, its last abode.
Oh! never wilt thou lie where thou hast lain
Within these arms: Alas! never again.

1872.

TO MARY.—1868

Silence has fallen on thy grave, and thou
Art passed from out our sight, leaving us nought
But memory for comfort and the thought
Of thy true soul, thy pure unstained brow,
Thy loving pity. I remember how
Thou sufferedst for sin and shame I deemed
Distant, intangible, until meseemed
That I by knowing thee might learn to know
The love of Christ. Oh! sad that these thine own,
Thy well beloved, thy children must pass on
Unguided by the light that ever shone
From thy true uprightness: and yet I trust
Thy spirit in them to make them as thou wast,
To others tender, to thyself but just.

1872.

CHARLES MURROUGH O'BRIEN

I.

Thou art gone! O my loved one; O my brother!
Gone from me when the year was in its spring;
Now without the snow is lying, and once more the world rejoices
In the holly and the ivy, and the merry Christmas voices;
But whither art thou gone, O my brother!

Oh, that cry from the bosoms of the mourners!
Old, so old, yet, alas! for ever new,
Many hearts through Christmas laughter low and silently are weeping,
While the watchers joyous deem hidden memories are sleeping;
But they know not the hearts of the mourners!

Thou hast borne me on thy heart, O my brother!
For thy love still was with me in my grief;
Love unasking, love unspeaking, yet my shelter in all sorrow,
Oh, to whom shall I turn in the darkness of the morrow?
Who can be to me as thou wert, O my brother?

1877.

TO THE SAME

II.

When I behold how half my life with thee
Lies sleeping, sorrowless, benumbed not dead,
I wonder at the Christ-love round thy head
Which all who knew thee bowed to. Can it be
That thou, the child of sorrow, born to see
Thy first earth-light through prison windows shed,
Heardest even then the strong angelic tread—
Self-sacrifice and love and loyalty ?
Begotten in a night of tears wert thou,
When famine o'er the land her hideous hands
Spread, crooning low; and when thy tender brow
Was sprinkled with fair water, harshest strands
Of hopeless black were woven through the fate
Of him who found his son at death's dark gate.

1887.

SPRING

I.

Those subtle stirrings of the unconscious soul,
That with green leaves and quivering buds awake;
Those memories of childhood's days that make
Of the on-coming spring a perfect whole—
Delights that live within and yield no toll
To death or passion, or the hours that break
Their little wavelets o'er the unstable lake,
That life still pictures on Time's restless shoal;
These, oh! my brother, dedicate to thee
And to thy love, I hold within my heart:
Thou in their beauty, in their life hast part,
And amidst them thy steps pass on by me;
Thou art within the sunshine, and I move
Now, as in years gone by, girt round with love.

SPRING

II.

Ye primrose banks that were of old so sweet,
Your fragrance and your beauty live once more;
For those that now are children let your store
Spread its world-old profusion round our feet;
For me, these few torn buds the first to meet
My eyes long watchful are, as those of yore
(Those, brother, we together knelt before),
Fresh from the heart of spring-tide, pure, complete.
These hold the ripple of water, golden light,
And shadows on the green new-springing grass,
These bloom beneath a sky, more clear, more bright,
These laugh beside the streamlets as we pass,
With arms entwined we go, slow wandering on,
Where the light fancy leads us, free, alone.

1880.

OUTLIVING LOVE

The water as I passed was reddened o'er
With tiny sheaths shed from the bright-green beach,
Which gathered into fleets in every reach,
Or hid themselves 'mid young leaves by the shore,
Their weary days remembered now no more.
When, clinging each to each and fold on fold,
They wrapped their tender nurslings from the cold,
And brought them to their joys 'mid trials sore.
Poor things! Forgotten now 'mid flowers and Spring,
You fill me with a shadow of dark fears,
That love may lessen with the growing years,
And that the changing hours that hour may bring,
When death shall seem the only good thing left
To me, in loneliness, of love bereft.

1870.

DEAFNESS—THE PAST AND THE PRESENT

The woods are silenced for me, and the streams
Ripple no more for me along the leas;
No more for me the birds sing melodies
To greet the morn, or give the sun good dreams;
No more the circling rooks in heavy crowds
Beat homeward cawing, 'neath the wind-swept clouds.

Where are the sweet sounds gone? Are they all gone?
Gone from the meadows deep with swathes of hay:
There the blithe corncrake woke the summer day.
Or startled the still air the whole night long.
Now silent in their beauty they bend low
While the rich-scented breezes o'er them blow.

Oh! merry voices of the world of life,
From the warm farm, the byre, the hen-roost shed;
There nesting swallows flashed above my head,
And all about the air with sound was rife;
With din of sparrow hordes, incessant, shrill,
Debating, scolding, loving—then so still.

So still, for I had called them! Breathlessly
I stood awaiting the oncoming burst
And rush of rival voices, all athirst
To fill the air with carols mad with glee—
Set with dark globes and crowns, the burnished leaves
Now sway in silence 'neath the silent eaves.

O earth! what murmurs sweet beguile thy rest,
Ere yet the thrush his glorious matin rings;
Ere yet the goldfinch on his glittering wings
Brushes the jasmine stars from round his nest;
Ere yet the daisy leaves turned toward the sun,
Bid night "Good night," and speak his day begun.

Oh, bitter loss! all Nature's voices dumb.
Oh, loss beyond all loss! about my neck
The children cast their arms; no voices break
Upon my ear; no sounds of laughter come—
Child's laughter, wrought of love, and life, and bliss;
Heedless I leave the rest, had I but this!
1879.

TO SUMMER

In thee a rest of beauty stills the air;
In thee fulfilment of the spring is won;
The lazy meadows basking in the sun
Grow to a browner silvery softness there;
In thee an hour to mere delight we spare,
We lie with leisure in her wide-leaved zone,
O'ershadowed with tranquillity, and shun
The fervour of the spring and autumn's care.
In thee the sounds are musical and low;
In thee the murmur of the bees is heard;
In thee the sleepy kine deep panting go
To where the sedges by the brook are stirred;
Or linger knee-deep where the shallow lies,
Till the clear golden clouds of evening rise.

WINTER

They say all beauty now is gone—
It seems not so to me;
Though short the days and dark the hours,
What lovely things I see!

For now beneath the dripping trees
The soft green mosses grow,
And lichens on the bare grey rocks
All gold and silver glow

Here, too, I find a streak of red—
It is the crane's bill leaf;
But touch it not, for fairies bring
To whoso plucks it grief.

See there! a golden furze has known
How welcome it would be,
And hasted to put forth its flowers—
A glorious sight to see.

And I must spare some love for those
Poor faded withered things
To whose sad relics e'en in death
The scent of summer clings.

Earth's beauty never fades for me,
However drear the skies,
For still some gleam from leaf or light
Rewards my watching eyes.

1869.

SONG

Bend, O bend, ye swaying trees,
Let your green leaves lightly swing
To the soft sun-scented breeze;
All the small birds carolling,
In the bright and blossoming May,
Tra lira and *tira lay*.

Soon, too soon, the Spring will pass,
Soon the faded leaves will fall,
On the wind-swept withering grass,
While above the black rooks call,
In the ash trees bare and grey,
"*Caw, caw, caw,*" and "*Well-a-day!*"

1887.

A SONNET ON THE SONNET

When the heart presses hard against its bars
And all the aching senses seek to reach
Through some determinate sweet form of speech
A rest and outcome from their inward jars,
The Sonnet then, amid our brain's mad wars,
Draws near to us, as some soft-handed leach,
Giving our thoughts deliverance, setting each
Firm and alone—self-centred as the stars.
Then to this new-born thing new beauties come,
And earth and air and all the sky and sea
Bring tribute to it of sweet minstrelsy,
So sweet, the cry within the heart is dumb.
And where our life held pain and cruel drought
Is now a font we scarce can live without.

THE CHRISTMAS ROSE

Oh! pure pale flower, beneath thy crown of leaves,
When we despair of beauty thou art born;
Thou dawnest for the cold grey winter's morn,
And for the sun that o'er yon blue hill weaves
Clear amber and dim gold—faint, faint, reprieves
Of loveliness at point to die outworn,
'Neath hopeless skies and cloudland racked and torn,
And the white death that kills as it deceives.
But is it so, beloved? Nay, not so.
Thou speak'st to us of life and not of death,
Not of the winter blast, nor of the snow,
But of the sun, the spring, the purple heath,
The wealth of the new year, the hope of flowers,
And the eternal sequence of the hours.

1880.

"IN THE BURDEN AND THE HEAT OF THE DAY"

Ye that desire, amid life's stress and strain,
The silent spaces of the summer day,
Slow movements of leaf masses, soft and grey,
And the rich harvest of the varied plain—
Ye to whom rest is life and silence again,
Whose burning feet have worn the dusty way,
Tread hither lightly o'er the new-mown hay,
'Mid labour void of strife and toil of pain.
Here, imaged in the new life of our age,
Relieve those sacred loves that death hath sealed,
Childhood's delight, and youth, and wounds long healed,
The burden of slow years and each new stage,
Whence, gazing on the old work that is done,
We question dimly of the work begun?

1882.

CONVALESCENCE

To watch death drawing near, and then to see
His fleeting shadow: to imagine rest
After much pain as even the very best
Of all earth's wearying gifts still left to me:
Then in a moment to find strength and glee,
And health and hope and life's own living zest
Awake once more within my throbbing breast!
Is it not strange such hope should ever be?
I feel the tussocks of the dewy grass
Spring neath my feet, I see the tangled woods,
I see the river's ever changing moods;
Wild winds stoop to embrace me as they pass,
And all my blood leaps up to greet their kiss—
Is it not strange to know once more such bliss?

Poems

A SHANNON PICTURE

Long rose red arrows, flung athwart a sky
Left by the sun's decline of gold and green;
A lake-like river stilled by frosty air,
Giving again those hues with opal sheen.

Such was the distance; on a neighbouring slope
Stood grouped together gentle, patient cows,
Yielding sweet milk unto deft-handed maids
The while their clouded breaths toward heaven
1869. arose.

A SHANNON SABBATH EVENING

A cloud land on its bosom
Of grey and gold and rose,
The silent river dreaming
Lies in a deep repose.

But ever, ever filling,
Comes in the flowing tide,
And near at hand the ripples
Across the pictures glide.

And far away an inlet,
More perfect than before,
Reflects in tender shining
The green indented shore.

Then slowly, slowly bending,
The tints fade one by one,
For the calm day at ending
Bids farewell to the sun.

Yet o'er the silent river
The dusk, the red dusk glows—
And see! its mirrored stillness
Is grey and gold and rose.

KEEN OF THE SHANNON

Dead! He is dead! and no more
Shall he hear the curlew whistle along the windy shore,
When the yellow, swirling tides their weight of waters pour
On the seaweed and the stones by the shore.
Ululu! O my son! ululu!

Dead! he is dead! and no more
Shall he see the river gleaming along the moonpath white,
Where the silver, swirling tides rush from darkness into light,
While they ripple and they roll on to night.
Ululu! O my son! ululu!

Dead! he is dead! and no more
Shall he watch the sunset glowing flush the vault of heaven around,
When the crimson, swirling tides give a low, rejoicing sound,
By the stillness and the light they are bound.
Ululu! O my son! ululu!

Dead! he is dead! and no more
Shall the star of morning flame above him o'er the wave,
While the cruel, swirling tides flash again the light it gave,
And the river is all black as the grave.
Ululu! O my son! ululu!

Dead! he is dead! and no more
The dead, white light of winter gleams for him upon the shore,
The dead, grey, swirling tides beating, beating o'er and o'er,
On the seaweed and the stones by the shore.
Ululu! O my son! ululu!

1879.

THE EVER-VARYING, EVER-WONDERFUL SHANNON.

A COMMONPLACE BALLAD

Poor Mick was trotting on to the town,
The side-car under him going,
He looked on the water swollen and brown,
He looked on the river flowing.

The day was drear and heavy and dank,
A sleety wind was blowing,
And the river creeping up over the bank
Was into the roadside going.

Now, all that day till the night drew near—
For the wind was bitterly blowing—
Poor Mick sat gossiping here and there,
While the river was steadily flowing.

"And why should ye lave? 'tis a cruel night.
Oh, why should ye be going?
Bide ye here till the morning light,
For the blackest wind is blowing!"

"The wife will be wanting her bread and tay,
And oil for to light her sewing;
Myself never minded the roughest day
Or the blackest black wind blowing.

"Gi-alang, old mare! get up out of that!
For sure 'tis home we're going!"
He buttoned his coat and settled his hat,
Nor thought of the river flowing.

But cold and drear and dark was the night,
The sleety wind was blowing;
And where the road that morning was right
The river's edge was flowing!

The morrow's morn saw the trembling mare,
Saw the river muddily flowing,
Saw boys and men seeking here and there,
Though the soft south winds were blowing.

Oh! the early sun is fair to see,
And the winter 'ill soon be going;
But deep and dank and dark lies he
Though the sweet south winds are blowing.

1904.

THE BROMIDON AND CARRAGH

Reading an account of "Canoeing on the Bromidon" (America), by J. Boyle O'Reilly, I thought of the Carragh (Kerry).

Art thou so lovely, Bromidon,
Sweet river of the far and shining west?
Are thy green banks deep fringed with royal ferns?
Do tender mosses there uprear their urns?
Do mirrored mountains on thy bosom rest,
Purple or pale or blue, beneath the evening sun?

Art thou so lovely, Bromidon?
Wait! I will tell thee of a little brook
Where I have wandered in a bygone hour
With those I loved, with those I see, no more.
From the wild Reeks, past many a lovely nook,
It foams and murmurs on toward the evening sun.

Art thou so lovely, Bromidon?
Is thy clear water brown and amber-gold?
Do sudden sparkles, where the salmon dips,
Uplift the drowsy finger from the lips
Of the pale, silent God, who from of old
Watched Erin's own sweet Carragh greet the evening sun?

Art thou so lovely, Bromidon ?
Who is it that tells us of thy winding ways ?
Does he not know that little Kerry stream,
Glittering and still and changeful as a dream ?
Has he no word for thee too in his lays,
Thee, lonely Carragh, rippling on beneath the evening sun ?

1884.

INNISFAIL—THE ISLAND OF DESTINY

Oh, well beloved isle, thy strange old name
Comes from the ancient days to us late-born,
Wrapped in the golden mists of Ireland's morn,
Lit with the light of her prophetic flame !
Who gave it thee ? What destiny or fame
Was seen for thee, thou child of bitter scorn ?
What hope, thou mother, of thy babes forlorn ?
What greatness of desire, what noblest aim ?
Thou Isle of Destiny ! thine hour draws nigh,
Thy place among the nations shall be sealed,
Thou that wert least of all shall stand on high,
Thy faith, thy love, thy chastity revealed :
Thy old deep wounds shall be laid bare and healed,
By God, thy Birthright and thy Destiny.

THE WORKERS FOR IRELAND

Now, or in future hope, is it not ours,
That freedom which they sought ?
Or has their life been wasted ? All their powers
Spent, and for nought ?

In tears, and blood, and death, their seed was sown,
They died and deemed it lost;
But God has raised it, nurturing it unknown,
Through dark and frost.

We who receive fruition of their griefs,
How can we judge or scoff?
Can we despise their names, scorn their beliefs,
Or cast them off?

No; though they failed, yet from their failures shone
A higher, nobler light.
No; though they died, their voices echo on
From might to might.

Then by the love of her we all have loved
Our birthplace, home, and grave,
Cherish their names who in their deaths have proved
In weakness brave.

1870.

I DWELL AMONG MY OWN PEOPLE

True are these words for me—God knows how true!—
My people, my own countrymen, my friends;
For ever, as I trust, till this life ends,
My love, my life, my hopes are vowed to you.
When sorrow came, when grief or pain I knew,
With reverent love and tender watchful care
My burden with me you have sought to bear,
Hiding your tears lest mine should start anew.
I fancy—if God wills it—when I die
Your children, playing where the sunbeams pass,
May gather daisies near me as I lie,
While you, reclining on the pillowed grass,
May say, "She loved us, dwelling midst her own;
God grant that we may meet around His throne."

1870.

GLADSTONE—1869

Oh, noble face marked deep by inward strife!
Oh, steadfast eyes, through which thy soul looks out!
Gladstone, we rest on thee, nor think of doubt,
Knowing that sooner wouldst thou lay down life
Than fail us now, or break the bonds of trust.
Behold! we look to thee with hopeful eyes,
Grasping thine outstretched hand which bids us rise
From that abyss where, stricken in the dust,
We mourned our ruined homes and crime-stained soil.
God grant thee wisdom in this trying hour;
Thou hast our prayers, may they increase thy power,
That, conquering now for us, thy name may live
When death hath freed thee from reproach and toil,
In that undying fame that love can give.

1869.

GLADSTONE—1877

Thou comest to us now when leaves are sere;
Now, when pale fields look upward to a sun
Dim, as if weary with the year's work done;
Now, when dread ghosts of winter hover near.
Yet Ireland welcomes thee; thou art by her
Even now beloved; even now thy name is one
She honours; in the ages yet to run,
That honour will be dearer and more dear.
Yea, Ireland loves thee; thou hast been a friend,
Faithful, though failing it may be to sound
The full chord of her being, and the round
That lies before her as the days ascend.
The noble speaker of a noble part,
My country greets thee, holds thee in her heart.

1877.

GLADSTONE

HIS CONFESSION THAT HE DID NOT RECOGNISE THE CRISIS
1879, 1880.

He did not know—he did not heed *this thing*
That all our land was moistened with the tears
Of blue-lipped, haggard women, mad with fears
For the poor babes that at their bare breasts cling.
He did not know—he did not hear the ring
Of words that yet re-echo in our ears,
Nor see the brand that famine fever sears
On human hearts crouched low beneath its wing.
And yet he dare to rule us, dare to thrust
Those very men who led us in full light
Into strong prison-bands, nor let the trust
And love of their own nation give respite
Ah, me! how foolish are the very wise,
How weak the good, how blind the clearest eyes!

1884.

GLADSTONE—1886

Once more thou art our friend, and we are glad,
Once more thy wavering needle points to truth
True in thine age as erst in thy strong youth!
Thou speakest, and straightway fierce thoughts, wild and bad,
Flee to dark realms, and where were musings mad,
Are love's revenge, warm hearts and Christian ruth;
Yea, and shall be, for now in very sooth
Shall they rewrite our page, blood-stained and sad.
Thou drawest England, too, with strenuous bands:
And not in vain, for we who hold this thing
As wrought of God, and safe within His hands,
Hear the Divine voice through the human ring,
And pray that He who gave thee this great grace
In freedom, trust, and peace will crown thy race.

1886.

THE ASSISTED EMIGRANTS

The first set of emigrants sent by the Government to my care consisted of twenty-seven souls. Of these, only one man knew English, one woman was an idiot, some were old, and most were young children.

Speechless! ay, speechless, for their Gaelic tongue
Is dead; as wanderers from some far-off age
They strike the shores of human life, to wage
A too unequal fight with toil and wrong.

This 'innocent!' are her steps also bound
To thee, O great New World of passionate strife?
Are hearts there loving enough to guard her life
'Mid thine harsh din, 'mid thine unresting round?

These innocents, these babes—ay, babes and men
Alike, for men all dim with age are here,
Driven from their hillside homes, so bare, so dear—
Would they had died before that bitter 'then'!

Ah, Christ! behold Thy lambs! behold Thy sheep!
Within my hands one moment they may rest,
Feed, and be satisfied, laugh light and jest,
Then forth upon their way to toil and weep—

To sin perchance. These maidens, all untried,
In womanhood so childlike—strong, yet so weak,
So guardless and so guileless—wolves that reek
With scent of blood against their coming bide.

Forth fare ye, wanderers, o'er the misty deep—
Farewell, farewell! Dumb, exiled, and oppressed,
Will ye look back to this one hour of rest?
Ah, Christ! behold Thy lambs! behold Thy sheep!

1883.

Poems

ENGLAND

England, were I indeed to praise thee now,
The bitter memories of our long defeat,
Of false feigned freedom, and of our so sweet
And best-loved land defamed by such as thou,
Would bring the shamed blood across my brow.
O bitter memories of exiled feet,
Of noblest hopes foregone, of hearts that beat
Through living flame, then broke ere they could bow!
England! were we but free, I well could love thee,
Be proud of my part in thee and thy blood,
Of the great dead who keep their watch above thee,
Of thy great word that is our daily food!
Yes, we could love a great one such as thou,
We could forgive, O England!—but not now

1884.

IRELAND.—FAREWELL

(Written when sailing for New York).

Ireland! were my love to thee but slight,
Were mine alone the vague unfettered eye
Skilless to trace those lovely lines that die
In melting blue beyond the furthest sight,
Yet even then methinks my heart aright
Had pulsed with thine in passionate reply
Requiring union with thee, 'neath a sky
So pure, so vivid through its liquid light.
But thou! the mother of my love and life,
On whose soft breast so oft my wounded head
Hath bowed itself in agony of strife,
Desiring rest among the unsuffering dead,
Rather henceforth shall my rejoicing be
That God hath given me life to live for thee.

1882.

ESSAYS

All these Essays are dated by their appearance in various publications, except the two printed from MS. I put that on The Feminine Animal *about 1890. The paper on* Solitude *is written on scraps of creamery accounts and bazaar tickets, some of which are dated 1892. This gives an anterior limit.*

The photographs in this book, except that of her in youth, appeared in Irish Gardening, *illustrating* The Making of Our Home. *The* Homestead *papers were illustrated by her own rough sketches, and followed by verses here reprinted—some of which had appeared in* Lyrics.

AN ESSAY ON BIRDS

(Bijah, Abigail, Davitt, and the Nizy.)

To be alone and yet not alone, to be not over strong, amid much silence and little human intercourse, yet to have thoughts filled and heart warmed by love and companionship, to sit still and laugh with no one to hear, to be daily more satisfied with home and country life even in the midst of falling interests and disheartened friends—is not this a secret worth knowing, one that gave an added light to saints and hermits of old, one that all lonely, deaf and delicate persons would do well to think of? "Our brothers the little birds," as St. Francis called them, are strangers when they might so easily be our fellow citizens, but I have thought some might like to hear of my familiar friends Bijah and Abigail, a pair of bullfinches, Davitt the goldfinch, and "the Nizy." When a child I had a strange power of taming wild birds, now largely lost, I am sorry to say, and used to stroke the wild bullfinches on their nests, to feed the corncrakes, and catch wrens in my hand, so when last year I caught a wild cock bullfinch in the greenhouse, I became anxious to try my powers again, and letting it fly about the drawingroom, I fed it from my hand. Very soon it was quite tame, but it had a mate which used to come calling at the windows, and one morning I, on looking round the room, "found only that it was not to be found," and an open window. This friendly little fellow,

"Solomon Abecasis," who spent most of his time seated on a peacock's feather before the mirror, had pleased me so much I felt I must get another. A young man in the neighbourhood caught me one bird after another, but all went away, and at last in despair I cried: "The next shall be called Abijah, and he will abide," and so it came to pass. Abijah, when I got him, was a dingy brown nestling, the hardest to tame of any, and great were the misgivings lest he should prove a hen; at last, however, one little patch of red feathers came after another (the colours come in patches, not single feathers), and now as Solomon in all his glory is my beautiful Bijah as he puffs up his gorgeous breast, pulls himself up to all his inches (about six when on tip toe), and bows to himself in the mirror. One fine morning Bijah flew away. I went mourning all that day, but toward nightfall I stepped out, and, like Dame Mitchell in search of her cat, I cried "Bijah," expecting only the echoes in reply, when suddenly a sweep of tiny wings almost touching my shoulder, flew thence to the "Milky Way," clematis (montana), and thence into the room. Joyfully he hopped into his home, not his prison, the cage, and my heart was comforted. He was Abijah, and he abided! He spent a night out another time, but in the morning followed me into the greenhouse, and seemed thoroughly frightened by his night's experience of liberty. Abijah domesticated, I had to get a wife for him. It is not good for man to be alone, we all know, though as to woman, perhaps it is an open question; and so Abigail, when she arrived, may have thought, for to say truth, Bijah bullied her dreadfully. I was unable to get a wild bird, so had to put up with a very dingy, dirty specimen of the sex who had been caged in a wretched dirty cage, so that the poor little thing when I got her could hardly fly she was so weak, and heavy and helpless. A week of good care

and liberty made another creature of her, but it was far more difficult to tame her than a real wild bird. When Bijah saw her first, he scorned her, then he put his head on one side and considered her—wisely, like the old cow.

> "There was an old man and he had an old cow,
> And he had nothing to give her.
> He took out his fiddle and played her a tune,
> 'Consider, good cow, consider—
> It is no time of year for the grass to grow,
> Consider, good cow, consider!'"

Having duly considered her, he hopped on the carpet, and gathered hairs till he had a fine moustache on each side of his mouth. Then he strutted over to her, made his bow solemnly, dropped his offering at her feet, and then flew to the mirror to admire himself. This was in the autumn; they became soon fond of one another, but Bijah bullied her like a true John Bull. I have had Abigail perched on my hand feeding: Bijah, with a rush from the other side of the room, alights on my elbow and rushes up my wrist, hissing at her with open mouth. Sometimes Bijah would light on a picture, Abigail timidly follow, alighting on the far end, then gently sidle along till within six inches of my gentleman, when with a rush and a little scream Bijah would dart at her. It was most amusing to see Bijah measuring her distance with a wicked eye to prevent undue familiarities. Bijah went to London in the winter—on coming home to Abigail they were much pleased to meet again, and as it was the spring season, I was curious to watch what they would do. For the first fortnight Bijah hardly noticed Abigail, but spent his whole time before the mirror, bowing to himself, twisting his tail about, or tugging at the fringe of a rug till his bill was full of hairs. Sometimes he would then fly to Abigail with the hairs, and hop round her bowing, but more often to the glass, there

beginning again all his little antics. During the extreme cold weather this stopped, but toward the middle of March the game changed. Abigail began now to follow Bijah about, to squat down on the floor and curtsey in the funniest way, calling him with a queer little note, or with her bill full of hairs. Then would go on the funniest parody of a minuet imaginable. First the two birds provide themselves as it were, he with moustachios, she with a fan—large bunches of hairs, thread or any rubbish. Then Abigail curtseys low on the carpet, Bijah puffs out his breast, erects his crest, wags his tail, and trailing his wings runs round and round her. She throws back her head between her shoulders and puffs up all her feathers till she looks a whole mass of downy grey, tail, wings, even head almost lost. She "sets" to Bijah and he to her; she runs a little way, he after her; she then to him, he from her; then comes a great chase to and fro, round one chair, under another, behind and over the sofa, and finally Bijah may hide under my skirts. When they have played enough, Abigail pops on my hand for seed, Bijah flies to the mirror to bow and make curtsies to the cock bird there. For the last few days, however, another act of the play is going on. Bijah has now turned fierce; if I leave him out of his cage, for hours together he literally flings himself against the mirror trying to fight the cock he sees there; he bites my fingers savagely, and when in his cage he pecked poor Abigail so fiercely I had to put "Davitt," the goldfinch, into the cage to keep the peace. Abigail and Abijah weigh ¾ ounce each, Davitt only ½ ounce, or a little over, but with his ruby head, his dangerous eye, and his long beak he is well able for the two of them. I must tell why I called the goldfinch "Davitt." Well, Bijah was such a bully I had to get a goldfinch who should be "a village Hampden who with dauntless breast the

little tyrant of his fields withstood." Davitt came and acted up to his character; but Hampden was a dull name, besides it was an Irish goldfinch, and sure if ever there were a peasant Hampden it is Davitt, so Davitt Mr. Goldy was christened. The goldfinch, too, is like Mr. Davitt—he has a quick, rapid eye, square shouldered, go-a-head, don't-meddle-with-me, but withal cheery and lightsome look, like the real man; as different as possible from the jovial, bumptious, swelling, walk-over-the-world, landlordy look of Master Bijah; and it is in their characters too. Little Davitt is terribly in earnest, he does not want to fight, but there is no giving in about that lad, whereas Bijah, with all his prancing, is easily frightened. Dear little Bijah too enjoys a joke and a little familiarity as well as anyone. Davitt comes when he wants food, Bijah hops on my book or my breakfast table, or my dog's head from pure friendliness and impudence. This digression on Davitt has broken the even tenor of my tale, but tales should go straight. So to return. Bijah at present is spending his whole time hurling himself against the mirror when out of his cage, and quarrelling with Davitt and Abigail when in it; the only peaceable personage is "the Nizy," the canary. "The Nizy" sings all day and looks pretty, but being a product of civilisation and breeding he is a fool; can't even fly straight or find his way in or out of his cage. However, liberty is improving him too, and he has begun to discover there is something better in this world than seed and water and a mean content, he begins to beat against his bars and rejoice in his liberty, though it must be owned he chirrups with delight when he finds himself back in his cage after a flight. I have a very old Irish dictionary full of the queerest old English words not to be found in Johnson, and in it I found "Nizy, a silly fellow." The name at once clung to the

canary as a good nickname does; he was a nizy born and a nizy he will die.

I may say that I find it quite enough to let the birds out for a flight in the morning and evening; they are quite happy in the cage all day as a rule. This then is the end of my "gibble gabble," to quote again from my old dictionary. So I and my little family make our bow and wish you all God-speed:—

> "Lenten is come with love to town,
> With blossmes and with briddes roune
> That every blisse bringeth."

1886.

THE FEMININE ANIMAL

We hear every day among the educated classes talk which is based on the assumption that the earlier chapters of Genesis are merely a folklore myth; and probably all thinking educated people are now more or less convinced that the interpretation to be put on them must be broad and not literal. In considering the creation of woman, as I regard the general law of evolution as being in some sense proved, I look to see what is the hidden meaning under that law of her being drawn from the side of man, brought forth from the same animal being as man. Now, this is scientifically literally true if we are to look on the lower animal world as our progenitors. To those who know nothing of natural history as a science, sex seems an immutable law of nature. So far from its being in reality an immutable law, there probably are at this very moment in which I write an infinitely greater number of living breathing animal organisms strictly or partially sexless than there are of the higher developments. Darwin sought to prove, and certainly went far to prove, that sex itself has been evolved as the pressure of life brought about the need of more and more specialised powers, and that the male was in the beginning one animal life with the female. This is not mere speculation, for nothing is more curious in natural history than the order of reproduction. It is a science in itself, as also is the history of the embryo which in man passes through stages apparently representative of the successive stages of animal evolution. We find nature's first idea of reproduction to be apparently simple fissure; then through

an astounding variety of forms come the developments of sex. Through great classes hermaphrodite organs prevail as in flowers, the ovary receiving the pollen as a stage of growth, and developing the seed. Then, again, through other great classes, some as easily observed as our garden snails, reproduction comes through the union of two equally endowed individuals. Then, again, communal animal life is known to us all in the bees, of whom the great majority are neuters, undeveloped females, as is proved by the fact that when a hive is left queenless, the bees will feed on special food what should be the neuter working bee egg, and it will develop the female organs and become a queen.

Steadily as we go up in the scale the result of the pressure of life has been to reserve for one animal all his forces for the contest with the world, while the other has been formed so as to give half her life, half her strength, to the reproduction of the species. Man, therefore, is in the beginning the same individual as woman, but has become differently specialised. In the man all his powers are concentrated in and on himself, whereas the woman is not perfect without the child; the child represents the force, the strength and the life man holds in his own individuality. To judge man and woman fairly you must put against the man the mother and the child at her breast, beautiful in all the glory of young life. To judge man and woman unfairly, put against the man, holding in himself to the very last of strength all the powers of his being, all the developments of the ages, the woman who, by every law of nature, should have divided her animal and her spiritual life, who, instead of shrivelling and fading away at middle age, should have passed on the standard, and have clothed herself again in young flesh and blood—flesh of her flesh, bone of her bone. Oh, what a marvellous

thing that is—that growing up of life within life, of body within body, of soul within soul! "Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect, and in thy book all my members were written, which, in continuance, were fashioned when as yet there was none of them."

Men may well assert their superiority, they who hold their lives in their own hands, for it is impossible that a woman, in whom all the forces of a nature meant for two or more have been cramped into one, shall be as truly balanced as the man. Men are not superior to the mother and child; they are superior to the single woman, because to the end the power of their nature is theirs "to create and to destroy," whereas the power of a woman's nature to develop, to expand, to bear fruit, has failed in its fulfilment without the child. Nor is it alone the physical nature that fails; those stores of nerve-passion and mother-love that have never been put to their proper use become as demons to turn in upon her and rend her. Miss Tynan has expressed it very beautifully in a late volume of poems:—

"She will not hear, she sees across
The world with a sick sense of loss
A house that none hath builded well,
A heaven wherein she shall not dwell,
A threshold that she may not pass,
Hearth fires that none hath lit, alas!

"Voices of children, calling her
'Mother' to make her heart strings stir,
Are calling in that lonely house.
Sweet as young birds the dawn will rouse,
The yellow heads against her knee
Flutter and dance untiringly.

. . . . .

"And for that music most forlorn
Voices of children never born,
And the love words that are not hers,
Even the sweet sky-choristers
Pleasure her not. Oh! let her be,
She and her dreams are company."

The Feminine Animal

We have now come to it that through the classes in which life is artificial the term "old maid" is no longer one of reproach, whereas one daily hears teeming motherhood lamented almost as a scandal. A woman in herself, and by herself alone, is required to be as hard and as well able to combat with the world as man. Half the female world in London society is running a race with old maidhood; half the male world, on the other hand, is looking on cheerfully and speculating. They say, "It's a pity, but it can't be helped." Now, I believe that to a large extent it can be helped, and will be helped, and that, in the natural course of things, women are being rapidly compelled to see that the chances of marriage are becoming fewer and fewer in society; they are forced to face the necessity of making their own lives, and I believe it is the best thing that could possibly happen them, and that, instead of making them harder and more manlike, it will restore to them the womanhood they are in danger of losing, in their present time of waiting on the men who do not come and that, as every one knows, shameful though it may be to say, is exactly what all the idle girls in London and elsewhere are doing. How *can* they do it? idling, amusing themselves, with their senses perfect and their youth and their education and strength, and all the work of the world crying to them. It is enough to make the blood flame to think of it, and to see what women are making of this society they create—for it is their creation, this artificial society. A man wants to be well fed and well clothed, and with that most men are content. But women! What will satisfy them?—servants and carriages, silks and satins. The actual thing they possess is nothing, but they must equal or exceed their neighbour in every ridiculous display. They make marriages impossible by their vanity and emulation.

Now, I picture to myself a state of things when a

young and strong woman shall be ashamed of a life of idleness and self-indulgence, or even want of definite work as a man is or ought to be—when, instead of the present division between the sexes, both shall be workers, going in and out together—when men shall meet and respect women in professional life, when they shall see women able to live alone and poorly in lodging or chambers—then, once again, the woman will become, as she is now among the poor, a help-meet for man, not a burden. Then women will go out to lands where men are now brutalised by their absence. Then the balance of the sexes will recover itself as the dangers and hardships of life are shared more equally, for more men are actually born into the world than women, though boys are more hard to rear than girls. Every symptom that I can see of the increasing freedom of the young woman reassures me that we are only in a transition stage. Would to God that with their desire of freedom their sense of responsibility for the gift of life were also increasing! but freedom is the first step to all progress, national or individual.

If my words can carry influence in this Ireland, let me say to every mother—If you wish your girls a happy life and a happy marriage, teach them that they are responsible to God for every power of brain or body they possess; that idleness is shame in man and woman alike, and that a girl may be as beautiful in plain and pure living as she can be decked in every absurd fashion. Let her make herself as charming as she can, so long as it does not interfere with her working life. A pretty picture here comes to my mind of the Italian girls in peasant costume, all sweet and clean, with bunches of real flowers in their hair, and carrying on their heads the lemon baskets or their washing. Take them as examples. Adorn as much as you like, but let the basis be work and cleanliness, truth, modesty, and pure womanhood.

THE PAINS OF SOLITUDE

L'Artiste déperit et s'éteint dans l'obscurité comme le penseur s'égare et s'exaspère dans la solitude absolue, comme tout esprit humain se détériore et se détruit dans l'isolement et la claustration.

"THE spirit of the artist perishes and is extinguished in obscurity even as a thinker becomes bewildered and exasperated in absolute solitude, and as every human nature deteriorates and is destroyed by isolation and confinement," George Sand—great thinker as she was, had, no doubt, herself experienced the bewilderment and exasperation produced by absolute solitude on an active mind. A man need not necessarily be imprisoned to taste what solitary confinement means; deafness is in itself at all times imbued with that condition. If, added to deafness, a life of extreme loneliness is one's fate, the separation from humanity is so complete that liberty itself becomes almost a mockery. We all know how, with the deaf and dumb, part of their malady consists, as a rule, in a state of tendency to nervous exasperation sometimes bordering on insanity. Everything—sickness, blindness, deafness above all, every loss of sense that tends to isolate a human life—tends to bring with it the exasperation of nerves which George Sand, having, no doubt, known what to expect, describes as the effect of absolute solitude. Solitude is necessary to the thinker, and solitude is the bane of the thinker. As a re-

lief, as a change, as a time for concentration of thought, and for the settling process which clears what is often a very hell-broth of aching mental puzzle and pain, solitude, or at least a time for retirement, is necessary. But place a mind which has the necessity of labour in its being in absolute and prolonged solitude, and it will grind itself to pieces for default of other grist. Human souls of that nature have no power of hybernation. They cannot suck their paws and live on their own fat as quieter natures seem able to do. Their minds are as wheels endowed with perpetual motion—they go round and round in everlasting circles from which there is no escape: from the morning which they greet with renewed fears of the terror of its long hours, to the evening when they cry aloud to God to give them rest, and find only a drugged pause instead of refreshing sleep, their mind going through its everlasting toil of rolling imaginary burdens uphill, only to see them appear again at the bottom in some new form. My God! what a torture it is; and we of the nineteenth century, who are too mild and gentle to use the scourge or the axe, we allow our laws to subject men to it for long spaces of time with no alleviation. Often, I have thought myself, if the choice were given me between the stake and solitary confinement, I should choose death by fire rather than insanity through mental torture, for it becomes a conscious and sentient insanity. Better the fool playing with straws and dreaming them to be gold than the greatest human mind unfed, unnourished, unclothed in the ghastly isolation of unresponsive silence. Yes, or in the isolation of communion with unresponsive minds; that, too, is terrible, but at least there is some slight outward relief, there is some movement to and fro, there is laughter and there may be tears, there are small annoyances, greetings and partings. There is not

the perpetual shadowless stillness of the outer world, the unceasing jar and haunting tumult of that world that one presses vainly back with stiffened fingers—that world from which the eyes look out in vague burning despair of rest.

It is not rest that is wanted then, it is work. It is human communion. It is the fulfilment of some foreseen task. It is the meeting of some soul that can start thought on new lines. Prometheus is bound to the rock, naught between him and heaven but the shadowy darkness of wings—wings of the birds of carrion that are tearing at his heart whilst the fire from heaven is burning in his brain. Oh! cut the chains and let him rise up and he shall fashion you noble things and glorious instead of lying there prostrate and broken, a horror to man and to his own soul.

To be bound, chained, unable to escape—that makes of solitude a thing of horror, but in itself it is rest and confinement. Conceive yourself as married in the bonds of most perfect union both of flesh and of spirit, one in soul and one in love; would not even then the need of absolute solitude recur, would not the craving for self-communion make even the most perfect interchanges of thought a thing to be shaken off at times? Must not the soul go out into the desert alone and confront alone the powers of good and of evil? Must not it wrestle alone with temptation, and alone be fed by the angels, before it can be fitted to act miracles of faith or to lay itself down a sacrifice for burning? Oh, those mute myriads that cried aloud to me—my hands were bound, what help was there in me? Oh, light and love, and hope and joy, and the communion of the human mind—shadows only passing on the dim surface of the mirror, while the tides swayed to and fro and brought no change! I have known that absolute solitude that

drives the thinker mad, and if any young man said to me his work was wearisome and dull and his society unsympathetic, I would say to him, Thank your God you have work and you can work : thank God for the humblest human sounds that come to your ears, for the most common-place human thought that may surround, rather than you should be forced to feed on your own flesh and blood and nerve in solitary and enforced idleness.

1892.

DAFFODILS AND THE SPRING

I AM a lone woman—I do not like winter. Many and dark are the hours from half-past three to bedtime, and though they say," Hope springs eternal in the human breast," I think he hibernates. November and December I see no sign of him. But, mind you! he wakes up on the 21st December.

After that you may see him any day on the roadside, the little Leprechaun whom the English call " Hope," tap, tap, tapping, cobbling up last year's old shoes to make them as good as new or better! Keep your eye on him, don't let him go, and he'll bribe you with fairy gold in lashings! See, he springs up with his red cap, all bobbed round with holly berries and a knot of mistletoe atop, a dark green jerkin trimmed with ivy berries, and a pair of little red-beech leaf breeches that look very sporting. He likes to have his clothes to match the season. He's a great little knave though, and he'll be off if you let him, especially if you wear blue, which he hates; but see, he is there with his first offering. He catches Father Christmas by the beard and sticks in his snowy fleece a long trail of gold jessamine stars! What a show he makes of sober old Christmas. Nay, who knows but he may deck him out with monthly rose and blue-grey Iris (stylosa). Now, beware of him, for he wants to set your ooting in the grass after pale, gold,shimmering cups he scatters there even under the snow (aconite). They are bewitched and dangerous. Let us not reason of them, but gaze and pass on.

What next? A feast, a noble feast! Chalices of red gold and silver, purple and streaked Venetian glass—crocus, with its saffron centre, beautiful as the sunshine it delights in,

Daffodils and the Spring

Well to be sure, has the little man the drop taken, or what is he about at all at all? He first picks out a little, grey, dingy, scrubby shrub—a very or'nary little affair—then away with him to the cave of the north winds, and back he comes with a great bagful of snow. He tosses it over the little tree. Hey! presto! The south wind twitches off the sheet, and there sits hundreds of little birds along every bough and twig, all wrapped up tight from the cold in silver-gray fox skin. Sometimes they sit still for near a month, but one day comes and the sweet wind blows, and look! one! two! three! the grey mantles are thrown away, and out troop all last year's little downy, golden goslings, clinging, clinging! We never knew what became of them last year, yet here they all are back like Bo Peep's sheep.

Now comes in the sweet of the year. Here come the trumpeters. What care they for the whistling winds of March. Blow on, March winds, blow us our daffodil trumpeters! But they gather up their ranks long before March.

Here is a brave mountaineer—a Spaniard—"the Pale Early one" (*Pallidus præcox*). The 26th of January saw him in the field. He is clad like bluff King Hal, in creamy white from head to foot. His trumpet is recurved in lines of perfect loveliness, when the bloom is really good; not like my miserable drawing in black and white, but cut in delicately tinted old ivory Oh! most beautiful!

After him comes a sturdy, rich, gold Englishman. (He fancies he is English, but I have a doubt; I seem to have read of a colony of Irish monks at Tenby in old times; he may have dropped his "Mac.") Anyhow he is a gallant fellow too, with also a recurved trumpet, and very solid corolla. Who comes now! Give place! give place! The high king of all Erin! The Ard Righ! See him riding along in his splendid saffron shirt and golden crown. At his side is the Tanist-Princess, gold vested, with a long flying, creamy cloak. These two ar•

pure Celts; the world outside knows them as the Irish daffodils above all others.

Ah! now, among your pigs and potatoes and creameries and butter firkins, couldn't you spare a little time to stick in a few of these cheap bulbs under your meadow grass up and down the country. They will bring you joy in the day of sorrow, as they have brought me. They will be joy to your children and your children's children.

Welcome, darling golden lilies!
Welcome, sunbright daffodillies!
Here in clusters green you grow,
There in masses bright you blow;
Gladdening winter's wearied eyes
With an ever new surprise;
Bending low as if to meet
Spring's sweet breath and hastening feet—
Bending low as if to hear
Voices from the summer near:
First of all our golden lilies,
Well beloved daffodillies.

Children love your scented beds,
Children fling your golden heads,
Toss them back and run for more,
Shouting round your endless store.
Spring, her hands so full, had found,
That she dropped you all around;
Tossed you down amidst the cold,
On the hard and parched mould;
But we love you all the same,
Love your strange child-given name.
Welcome, darling golden lilies,
Summer-scented daffodillies.

March, 1898.

East Garden from the South.

THE RIVER SHANNON

"The spacious Shenan spreading like a sea."
—*Edmund Spenser.*

When I walk here along by the river in the midst of this glory of May, I say to myself—"What infinite beauty must this world show to those who have entered the 'Beatific vision' and can embrace its varied loveliness in one human consciousness." It is a splendid conception at the least to imagine that through perfect and intimate union with God the knowledge and the vision of God may be shared by the human spirit. Blanco White, in a very fine sonnet on the revelation darkness brings us of the infinite abyss of stars, says :—

"If light can thus conceal, wherefore not life?"

The daily aspect of things is, in a sense, also a concealment. Men come and go by this great river (too few of them indeed), and the revelation of its beauty is not made to them fully, often not at all; but let one live by it and it is "the most beautiful place in the world." A friend quoted to me the other day—"Ad ogni uccello suo nido è bello." Even so, to each of us comes the realisation of the hidden beauty that lies all round.

But to-night it was no hidden beauty. I went down by the river in the evening. It was full, the tide just past the turn, and sweeping down the great mass of water at an extraordinary pace, and yet, though the whole river was swinging along at many miles an hour,

the surface was a marvellous mirror. The glowing masses of furze on the island, a quarter mile away, were so near and distinct in the wave one could almost stretch out a hand to gather them. Every cloud and every shade of light and colour in the sky were again in the river, but far more intense. At my feet, and twenty yards down and across the channel, was a dense black cloud reflected; this formed an unbroken mass of shadow in front. Its crenelated edge cut sharp against the reflection of silver, blue, grey and intense white light stretching far away westward. I stood, as the old books used to say, "entranced." And still the river swept down, and still the furze and the wonderful green and the dark cloud bar were, as it were, under my hand, and the glorious "gates of the Shannon," as the Elizabethans called this Foynes, were opened to heaven's light beyond my touch.

We, thy children, love thee, noble river;
For us thy tides flow ever;
For us o'er all thy solitudes
Eternal beauty broods.
For us thy faint, pale distances extend—
With the far heavens to blend.

Oh, river! river! Home of the wild cloudland,
Home of the restful woodland;
We ask not beauty from thee—being ever
Our own eternal river.

We know the secret of thy tides, we know
The swell, the fall, the pantings of thy bosom;
Thy passions and thy restings and thy strife—
Even as the weed tossed idly on the flow;
Even as the flowers that on thy marges blossom,
We are fed from thee and nourished from thy life.

May, 1898.

PASTORAL MEMORIES

It remains throughout one's whole life a beautiful thing to have been born and reared in a rich pastoral country. Images of beauty lie hidden in the mind; sweet scents and homely sounds return even to the dulled senses of after life. Deafness itself, even, does not wholly separate one from a consciousness of those simple sounds to which one has been, as it were, born. The imagination has so strong a hold it gives hearing to the brain even when the ear is useless. I am deaf, I know, but the great sweep of the scythe through falling grass repeats its rhythm of sound to me still. This is individual, but to all, I think, a richer and fuller enjoyment of the mere earth surface must accompany the familiarity of childhood with every sight and sound of the sweet brown clay and its produce. For one thing, we country-bred folk understand it all so much better than those to whom the multitudinous growth and leafage is all one in meaning, like the surface of a carpet.

I recall from the early days of my own life (I can remember just after the great famine) the farm life in the cottages round my home. I was then a very independent little fair-haired mortal, and was very much given to trotting off through the fields quite alone to my farm friends. Well, they did welcome me! The bowls of cream and solid sour milk, which I liked so well, that I got through were surprising. There was the dark but

clean dairy, the large, dark, thatched kitchen, with the old palsied mother in the corner, and two or three fine, handsome, buxom girls. There was a big spinning wheel, and many a time I tangled and broke the woollen thread. But they had patience. Everything I might do they had patience to suffer. Time was no great value, and the skein was easily joined by the skilled hand of the spinner. But even to my child eyes a tragedy was wrought into the spinning and the bending of that woman's hands about the wool. Her daughter had run away with a soldier. Though, I think, they married, the prejudice against soldiers was then very strong, and it simply broke her mother's heart. Her face has remained with me throughout life a revelation of the pain of a mother's love ; a thing beautiful and terrible.

But the shadow of the flowering limes was all over, and hanging in the branches thereof I seem to see a dainty snow-white cloth full of cream slowly dripping away its superfluous moisture, slowly hardening into the delicious solidified happiness called a cream cheese. Why do we not have such cream cheeses now ? Ivory white, exquisite in texture, delicately suggestive of all green fresh things—beautiful to look at and perfect to the taste. It seems to me we lived on cream cheese in old times ; now they are unheard of.

What is worthy to be spoken of now after them ? One little tender remembrance of a long, thin young man called Dan, holding whose hand I used to toddle round after the cows and learn to milk. I loved him sincerely, and respected him deeply, for why ? Because a rumour was afloat—true or false, I know not—that Dan was *in with the White Boys!* What more was wanted to make him a hero, when he was so kind and affable as to teach me to milk ? Farewell, Dan ; farewell, the heaps and mountains of blazing hot potatoes,

butter and eggs, and sour milk! How despicable were beef and mutton, and the civilised table cloth after ye!

Have you seen, have you seen in the grey and misty morning'
When the golden sun is up and peeping o'er the lea,
When the thrushes and the larks without a note of warning
Break into a rush of singing, fresh and wild and free—
Have you seen the farmer treading through the nodding grasses,
Or seen him with his cattle when the girls have come to milk—
Patting their moist heaving sides, and joking with the lasses,
While pressing to his heart of hearts his daughter's head of silk?
And oh! but there is joy in the brightness of the earth,
Oh, but God has blessed its goodness and its mirth!

June, 1898.

A JOG, JOG JOURNEY FROM DUBLIN TO LIMERICK

We started, with nothing arranged, as I intended to slip into the train at Kingsbridge in the morning, and let Dan go home alone, but fate meant otherwise. It was late, it was dark, it was raining; our destination was an unknown house, and I was dead tired and burdened with odds and ends innumerable, but when I found the phaeton so snug, my dear Gem on the tramp, and the Liffey Valley revealing its beauty from step to step, the tramp spirit took hold, and I felt I must go on. As compared with America, Ireland is so wonderfully varied. Look at that lovely Liffey Valley hidden away so that till one is fairly into it one cannot imagine it.

Compare it with Malahide, Bray, Foxrock—all so near, all so lovely, all so individual; and it is the same all over Ireland, every five miles shows a different country, except in the mountainous highlands. In America the train passes through hundreds of miles of scenery all of the same type—that is, one type prevails for so long. People who rush through Ireland to the show places imagine, as some very foolish person said, that it is "an ugly picture set in a beautiful frame." No! it is a true artist's picture—every simple thing bewitched into loveliness by its exquisite atmospheric effects. The "frame"—the seaboard—is lovely, certainly, but really I think Queen's County is as lovely as anything I have ever seen.

A Jog, Jog Journey to Limerick

I must return to our night's lodging. Just as we were beginning to wonder where our house had hidden itself, a cyclist saluted. Here was our host; here was our gate. A deep hidden avenue, an old house, an old orchard, and the river close by—one of those charming old Dublin houses which, with its low ceilings, nice cornices, large rounded bowed rooms rather than windows, are so delightfully graceful in their proportions. A house such as my soul loveth, this was indeed—Boss seized his opportunity to assault a dog three times his size with great uproar.

Well, in the morning I had to go up that Liffey Valley and see the rest of it—a new tract of country to me. We twisted along till we came to Lucan, but pony had been giving very clear indications that we were overweighted, and why not? For we had cart-irons and knives and forks and boots, and house linen, &c., &c Now, Gem does not object to a tramp, but does to over loading, and turns round and looks at us at the bottom of every hill. Lucan station saw her delivered from most of her burden, and on we went, on, on, on, not knowing clearly where we were going, but vaguely that it was south-west, and towards Sallins. A very pretty road with trees and greenery it would have been, but that it was intensely cold. First of June, but like November, with cutting rain off and on. I laughed to see the poultry during a shower, about a dozen of them, standing in a row with their heads against the wall to shelter, and envied them!

Boss kept us cheered, however. There was not a bit of me he did not trample upon in frantic endeavours to get at everything he saw. "O Dan, Dan! that dog is scrambling up my shoulders, under my cloak, and I can't pull him out!" "Now, Boss, that's not a big dog! that's a donkey. Don't you know the difference between a dog and a donkey?"

A Jog, Jog Journey to Limerick

We crossed the railway and found a station. It was Straffan. That gave us a standing place. Hitherto we had not rightly known where we were, but from that on we struck one of the great old roads of the country, a road that took us right through the Bog of Allen and the great flat country of the Barrow, and the Grand Canal, by Robertstown and Rathangan. The road from this point (Straffan) to Rathdowney is almost flat, and a grand cycling road, and the country was strangely beautiful—long, flat, straight lines, broken here and there with small hills; larger hills far off, but mainly before and around us to the horizon the ground was absolutely flat, flat as the sea—and a sea it must have been comparatively late in geological time, for close to the Hill of Allen is a raised sea-beach of pure sea sand. Standing there on that slight rise, rubbing the sea sand through my hands, and looking out over the June grass swaying to the keen wind, it needed little imagination to change the scene into an inland sea, the green meadows into waves, the bog-cotton to dancing foam, and the darkness of the bog to "wine-dark" cloud shadows.

Strangely the view most like to this view that I have seen was from Minneapolis, out in Minnesota, looking over the prairie.

All our drive that day we seemed to be crossing unaccountable canals, for our map only showed one, but there were many more. These canals were bordered with bog-bean, with its graceful and beautiful white flower and fine leafage; then golden water lilies and marsh marigold, and I doubt not, in their seasons, many more lovely plants. These are not single plants or patches, but rather a beautiful embroidered border to the shining, silent, straight water. I own I love a canal. It has something of the charm that George Sand so beautifully ascribes to the road. It has that purified,

It has its own secret peacefulness, its subdued wildness. Man has conquered nature to use, and nature has reconquered man's work to beauty.

Much of the ground we passed through that day must have been under water in the winter; the sign of the grey mud was still on the grass. Sad to think this great fertilising possibility is still untamed, doing harm where it might do good. The whole drive was beautiful and interesting; but from Lucan to Rathangan is a long, long stretch, and there did not seem a house one could shelter in all that way.

I thought we should have to make Portarlington, and I was very, very tired. (Of course on these long tramps we camp, feed horse and ourselves by the roadside in mid-day.) On reaching Rathangan we found it a village town, with something calling itself an hotel.

"Dan," said I, "I'm tired, and so is pony. We have come a long way from Chapelizod, let us see if we can get a cup of tea and a rest here, and then go on." In we went and found a very clean sittingroom and bedroom. So, after all, we stayed the night. A very friendly, kindly little place. My experience is that one often finds the cleanest hotels in quite tiny places. Of course accommodation is often rather primitive, but one might go further and fare worse, and 10s. was my night's bill.

Next morning I had a curious reminder of last century's wild Ireland. I noticed at breakfast a charming quaint egg-cup, and asked the maid about it. She told me it was her grandmother's, and then she brought out a number of old bits of china and some very old-fashioned stemless wine glasses. In those days, to escape drinking was almost impossible, for the custom was to break the wine glass stems, so that a man had to empty his glass, like it or no!—hence stemless, flat-bottomed wine glasses were made for careful people. I had heard of

but not seen them before; such quaint little things they looked, like a man on stumps, that I wished I could carry off a pair, but they were evidently family treasures. To show you how kindly these country inns often are, I like to tell that before I left the house the girl brought me a pair of little vases as a present to "remember Rathangan by." It was not the first time in my wanderings that this has happened. In this neighbourhood also I found another charming remembrance—the Irish wall toad-flax (*Linaria cymbalaria*) in a snow-white variety just touched with pale yellow in the centre. A sweet little plant, like fairy carving in ivory, leaf and growth and flower all so perfect.

About half-way to Portarlington you still pass through much bog, but after that the country is fertile and pretty with trees. We met here a drover with cattle, so very unimproved, so lean, so small, that I wondered what hidden away part of Ireland had gone to the making of them. Perhaps some recesses of the Slieve Bloom Mountains to which we were drawing near. Portarlington we passed through, on our way, as we supposed, to Maryborough; but where we arrive on these tramps is always uncertain, and this was what happened to us. A cross roads—Dan to passing man: "Please, which is the way to Maryborough?" "There's two roads here and you can go either." "Which is the best of them,?" said I. "That's the best, ma'am, but it's the longest." "We'll go that road, Dan. Those hills near Maryborough are no joke." I had had much experience of the road between Maryborough and Monasterevan. A very pretty road it is, with charming old Scotch firs, but it goes quite straight up hill and down dale like a curragh over the Atlantic billows! Well, we drove on, mind you, to Maryborough. After about five miles—"Dan! what's that town before us? Surely it can't be Mary-

borough yet?" "No, Miss, that's not Maryborough, I think." The map comes out. "It must be Maryborough, Dan! It can't possibly be Monasterevan, and there's no other big town anywhere around here." Dan: "Well, I don't think it can be Maryborough; it don't look like it." "Shout at that man, Dan, and ask him the name of that big town, and how it comes here?" "He says it's Mountmellick, Miss!" "Oh! bravo! That's what has happened us! That's grand! I was afraid of going for Mountmellick. I thought it was quite up in the hills. We'll go straight through now to Mountrath; it's much our best way." So poor Maryborough never saw the dear Boss! and we trotted through a flourishing looking town that was quite unconscious of its accidental appearance on our scenes.

From this on, our road was very pretty. If the mind is attuned to beauty of a quiet nature, as much pleasure can be drawn from it as from more exciting scenes, and it does not fag the attention and weary one. The Alps (especially in Spring) are a wonderful revelation, but I have been so absolutely tired by the excitement of their beauty that I could no longer enjoy. This never happens in Ireland. I have driven through the country near Mountrath several times, and always found it lovely. The atmospheric effects are peculiarly beautiful. The neighbouring ranges—Slieve Bloom and Devil's Bit—probably clear the air, and the heather over Slieve Bloom is wonderful. The mountains in autumn are purple and rose from base to tip, and most lovely; but the spring dress was almost as beautiful, green and blue lighted slopes embroidered with golden furze. There are trees, too, in sufficient numbers to relieve the bare mountain side. As you look back also towards Kildare the country is curiously picturesque—flats with grey clumps of trees and poplars, and sudden

small island-like hills, rather France-like views. I love the country east of Mountrath, but Mountrath is impossible as regards accommodation. This time we came in there for a fair, and could get no attendance at all at either of the hotels. We had to push on to the nearest town—Rathdowney. Mountrath is not a small town, and seems to have business; it is a pity the hotels are so poor, as it would be a nice centre for cyclists. That is how it is in Ireland. You will find comfortable, cleanly inns in tiny places, and in good towns miserable, dirty hotels.

Well, we had to go on, like it or no; we could not even get pony shod, and Dan was shaking his head. "Well, Dan! we've got a splendid evening and plenty of time, and we'll go very easy. Perhaps we'll get a forge on the road." And sure enough we did. Womenkind don't see that process of shoeing or removing often, and it struck me much—the picturesque grey-headed smith, so quick and handy, and the perfect restful confidence of the pony, her leg and foot lying on his knee as a dog might lay its head on mine. (What a wonder the first training of the wild horse to that process must have been when you come to think of it!) The shoe is off with a few deft strokes, the foot is pared all round and underneath (then a little dog runs in and eats the parings, Boss and he make friends), and on goes the shoe before you know where you are! And then elaborate filings of odd nail ends. It was a most pleasant interlude in the beautiful evening lights, for our day had been perfection and most thoroughly enjoyed.

I own before I visited Rathdowney I did not know of its existence, but it is quite a smart little town, stirring and neat, with a large brewery, a reservoir, swans and a swan island, and, I believe, two really good hotels. Near my hotel is an old bridge with the motto, if I remember

rightly—" This bridge was erected in 1813 by the spirited and independent inhabitants of Rathdowney." A bit of " highfaluting " that amused me, all the more as from Davies' old dictionary of Ireland Rathdowney seems to have been rather a poor little place at that time. The go-ahead spirit was there, you see, and still at the end of near a century the words appear true. There is an appearance of energy in the place usually sadly wanting. I bought here a pair of phaeton reins, home-made, for 6s. 6d., good and strong. Too seldom one can find anything home-made for sale in Ireland. Hotel bill here cost 10s. 6d. Total cost from Dublin—man, horse, dog, self, carriage, and oats (but with mid-day dinners in basket from home)—came to £1 5s. 10d. to Limerick. Train fares would be about—man, 10s.; self (2nd), 19s.; dog, 2s. 6d.; horse, £2; carriage, about £3. People do not realise the saving of going by road when having to move horses, &c. Railway fares for horses are far too high.

Rathdowney is, I think, fifty-eight miles from Limerick, as far as I can make out on map, but pony was fresh and new shod, and I had all my Dublin weariness blown away by the splendid fresh air all day, these drives are so life-giving. So with a good courage, not knowing what was before us, we started on a rather chill morning. Wisdom was in me, but it had not fair play! " Dan," said I, " the day is not too good; we'll keep the low country and go by Dundrum. At the worst there is a good room there." Ah! yes, I was wise! We drove to Templemore, then along a fine road. An evil prompting made me ask: " Where does this fine road lead to? " " To Borrisoleigh." It was a word of temptation. I had been there years before, and wished to return. So all my wisdom flew away, and we with it, into the heart of the wild, cold hills. These big old roads, the old

coaching roads throughout Ireland, are a real fine sight; of great width, finely kept, bordered on either side with ten feet or more of "the long farm," * shaded often with really fine trees. They were a great surprise and joy to me when I first began my tramps. Now I reckon on them and their park-avenue-like distances as a more ambitious soul reckons on Mount Blanc; but surely I did not expect one leading to Borrisoleigh, a little village in a gap through which the road winds that leads from South Tipperary to Nenagh. Borrisoleigh Castle, however, must have been an outpost of civilisation long ago, for behind it lies the stretch of country between Devil's Bit and Keeper Mountains, that is even now wild and desolate to a degree. In Davies' very good Atlas, published 1837, no road is shown through this mountain district we went through; it must then have been utter wilderness. It has now a thoroughly good road, but is still one of the dreariest districts I have ever been through. My perverse desire to see everything made us attempt a road "direct to Newport through the hills." Weary on us! Hour after hour, hour after hour from Borrisoleigh, on we drove, twisting round one black-capped and round-headed hill after another; no trees, nor ruins, no views, no villages, and yet a share of population, and a creamery! See how insidious is this agent of civilisation! It has invaded even that desolate country.

It was a fearful drive. It was blowing cold, wet rain in our faces (we all know the difference between wet rain and dry!) Every hill we twisted round only opened up new and interminable vistas of black valley and black round hills. I could have sat down on a fence and cried,

* Poor people in Donegal have their beasts "out on the long farm!"—that is, grazing by the roadside.—S. G.

but it would have been no good, so instead I quoted Horatius Cocles to cheer up Dan—"And the strong heart within him bare bravely up his chin." As for Boss, he subsided altogether under my rug. For me, I took refuge behind my aged umbrella, but as I still wanted to see, I poked long slits in the old silk till I got a fine view of the pony's ears. This is a real practical use for an old umbrella; stick it before your nose, poke holes into it, and you have then a tent and a window, and a window frame!

Oh! the longing for some incident! Such an incident as (here I show it) I came in for a few days ago—a grand cock fight. I was strolling home one fine evening and came on this pair, at it hammer and tongs, enjoying themselves amazingly, till their old mistress hustled them off; but we had no such luck that cold wet evening. I have travelled on either side of those hills, yet, surely, I never realised the existence of that broad band of wilderness in the heart of those mountains about twenty-eight miles long by ten broad. What a fastness it must have been in Elizabethan times! Then the Irish possessed immense herds, and one can fancy that even now thousands of cattle might be hidden away unknown in the folds of those hills.—The *Homestead* has letters off and on attributing the success of England to meat eating. In Elizabeth's time potatoes were not, corn was destroyed in the wars. The Irish lived almost exclusively on meat. English soldiers are reported as dying from excess of fresh meat and want of other food in Ireland. Meat eating is not the secret of success, for hunting tribes are proverbially indolent.

I said before there were no villages on this road—there are none in the usual sense, but as one may see in America in some wilderness, hundreds of miles from anywhere, four or five large frame-houses called "Liverpool," or

A Jog, Jog Journey to Limerick

"London," so here at a cross-road were four or five substantial houses fourteen miles or so from everywhere—and the name of that place is "Milestone." Does not the very name speak the featureless nature of the country? Here was no crag or castle, wood or country house, lough, or lis or dun to name the place by; only the long-watched for Milestone!

When at last, near 7 o'clock, we opened up the Limerick valley, the sun came out to greet us, or rather I suspect we came out of the mountain mist into a glory of grey and silver lights over the Shannon plain. Then out popped Boss to bark at everything, the weary pony pricked up her ears smelling familiar smells, and we rejoiced as those do who have seen and endured and escaped! Well, we have seen it. This bit of Ireland so near home, of which I knew nothing, is now in my hands to put into its place as part of the country. Do my readers—do you who fly all over the world in trains—understand at all the pleasure of having a mental grip of your own country foot by foot? For me, I like a jog, jog journey.

Erin! thy children love, and love for ever,
With that abiding love that cannot die,
Thy cloudland, thy mountains, thine ocean, and thy sky,
Thy meadowed valleys green, thy sea-like river;
Can we tear them from our hearts? can we sever
Those bonds? Ah never—never—till we die.

August, 1898.

SHANID CASTLE

In the year 1863, in the last autumn of life my father, William Smith O'Brien, ever saw, I stood with him one beautiful evening on top of the hill of Knockainey, in the east of the county of Limerick—that interesting Knockainey, the site of so much both of legend and history. The western sky was full of light, and even at that great distance—I suppose at least twenty-five miles—we were able to distinguish the strange artificial hill of Shanid, its outline cut clear against the sunset, dominating the whole western horizon. Two rough drawings will give an idea of its remarkable appearance. The first shows just the Keep and top of the hill on which it is built; the second shows it in relation to the surrounding country, and Shanagolden in the foreground. The great masses of masonry, nine feet in width, have to be remembered in estimating the size; for though the actual remaining buildings are not large, the whole thing, the artificially-shaped hill, the great mass of masonry standing like a black clenched fist thrust against the western heavens, makes it certainly one of the most impressive of our ancient remains. It is a thousand pities that the Board for preserving ancient buildings has overlooked it, for it is quite unique. It is also interesting as the original fortress of the Geraldines—"Shanid aboo" being their war cry. The time of the construction of the castle is unknown, but to me it appears that

these circular fortifications were the fashion in the period just preceding and during King John's reign.

For the first time for many long years I went up to the castle the other day, myself and two raven-locked children, and the Boss and his dad. The children ran up and scrambled about hatless, their black locks flying in the wind that for ever beats about this high-perched castle, and gave no thought to me, while I climbed slowly up the almost perpendicular grass side, and many a scene out of the far away times of Ireland came out before my fancy. Yes, and also something of to-day—a something that spoke human life, but would need Miss Barlow's delicate genius fully to interpret. On this wild and lonely hillside I noticed a flagstone lying. I went up to it. It was a miniature grave—a new grave-stone drawn from the castle walls, laid down on a bed of moss and flowers, evidently fresh. The castle towered over my head, at my feet lay this child's work. On the stone was written in blue chalk: "The death of the little queen." Then another hand had apparently written: "We were very hard on them." I lifted the stone, but saw only moss and flowers. What child tragedy (or perhaps it was the fairies) lay in those words? Surely it was a poetic nature that sought such a resting place for some dead love, and adorned it so carefully—"the little queen." Ah! it touched all the chords of thought to contrast that not fully comprehended child work with all the terrible and wild human life that had been, and had ended, and was also hinted at but not explained by the gloomy remains of stone and earth building around.

My especial mission this time to the castle was also suggestive. There is a certain very rare thistle, with large smooth leaves and great feathery heads, called the Milk Thistle, or, in Ireland, the "Virgin Mary's Thistle."

The reason it is so called is because the leaves are all blotched and marbled with white stains, and legend made it a sacred plant, bearing for ever stains of the Blessed Virgin's milk. Now, I had it in my mind that thirty years ago I had seen this plant at the castle, and as my brother had told me it was also found at Askeaton, I wished to confirm my impression. Sure enough, I found a mass of it growing together, only on the southern exposure, under the great wall. Now, this plant is said to exist only as an introduced plant in the British Isles. To account for it, therefore, on this utterly lonely and desolate hill-top, we must look back through the centuries and see the sacred plant in the monastery garden at Askeaton (mind, Askeaton was the great Geraldine home in Desmond). We must think how the seed may—in fact, must—have been carried up to this watch tower, perhaps by some long-haired daughter of the Geraldines, sent for safety to the mountain fortress; we must imagine how its frail growth (only annual) took hold on the sheltered side; we must see generation after generation of men swept away, the monastery torn down and desecrated, the name of Desmond almost forgotten, the great Geraldine race broken and destroyed; we must see the almost impregnable castle blown to pieces and left as a trampling ground for the summer-heated cattle; more wonderful than all, we must realise that time has so gone by that no record is left us of that great downfall and destruction—nothing—nothing but a few pieces of nine-foot thick wall, a few earth mounds, and the sacred plant. Irishmen! What national history lies in one seed of that plant. Think of it! realise it!

I rooted pieces of old bone out of the steepest side of the hill. Were they human? Did they belong to the men who died when the castle fell? I desire death when I think of these things, if death gives the drawing

back of the veil that separates us from the generations of the dead. I desire death that I may go hand and hand with the dead, that I may see, and see, and see, and know even as I am known!

Ah! but the living, the living shall praise Thee, O Lord! and to those who live or have lived in our own life we must still return, and I look forth over County Limerick and think of the men of our time. First, almost on Shanid Hill, is the cottage where my friend Father Richard O'Kennedy was born, whose beautiful sketches of Irish peasant life are lit by the pathos and humour of his own full-blooded Celtic heart. A little further down the hill lies the birth-place of Sir de Lacy Evans, a distinguished soldier. Then comes old Abbey, the home of Colonel Morgan, C.B., another Indian hero; long may he live to enjoy his curious old home, the ancient "Home of the Black Hag!" To the north on the Shannon is Fairy Lawn, the home of Gerald Griffin. To the south, Cahirmoyle, the home and grave of W. S. O'Brien. Away across the plain we see Curragh, the home of the poet de Veres—Sir Aubrey, his son Aubrey, and Sir Stephen—all distinguished men. In the craggy district close by is the old home of the Copleys, Ballyclough; they gave England a Lord Chancellor—Lord Lyndhurst. You cross the road from them to Ballycullen, from which came the Irish Lord Chancellor Naish, or Nasshe, as the name is spelt on the old maps, for they have been very long in this spot. Then we must not forget the owners of Shanid, the Spring Rice family—the late Lord Monteagle, Chancellor of the Exchequer, his son, Stephen Spring Rice, whose fame abides in his own country; and the present Lord Monteagle (long may he reign!) But I must not go too far afield, or the *Homestead* will put an extinguisher over me! Good bye!

Shanid Castle

Throughout those years—those strange, long, voiceless
years—
What hidden generations burst the womb,
Bore the long struggle of life, of love, of tears,
To the sad rest of a forgotten tomb?

To them the past were shadows, and our "now"
A dream unfashioned. Did they, therefore, live
Void of all strife? with calm, unharassed brow
Welcome the fates that time and death might give?

Ah no! their tears were salt, their nerves as ours
Thrilled to love's touch, and all our being is
Was theirs—the sorrow and the love that dowers
Our world with pain and joy, with tears and bliss.

The long, long past, and this our life to-day—
That shadowy past and this too present "now,"
The hands of friends I touch, the mouldering clay,
Dead loves that live within my heart, and Thou.

O Lord! O Life! Who bindest all in one,
Lie mirrored on my gazing soul, as lie
The summer fulness and its central sun,
Imaged within the compass of mine eye.

September, 1898

FROM A ROMAN CATHOLIC

A letter written to Mr. Standish James O'Grady's *All Ireland Review*, October 14, 1905:—

DEAR MR. O'GRADY,—I have been talking all the time to you this last week, out of reading *The Social Unrest: Studies in Labour and Socialist Movements* (Brooks), an American book that throws great light on all labour subjects. For myself, I steadfastly believe in individuality primarily; but I also believe in sociality. Man must aim to work to give each one full scope for his whole genius and life, and also to draw mankind into communities, working consciously together to raise the whole body corporate, even as every member of our physical body must be in health, and given exercise, and development, and freedom, before the body corporate can reach its full growth.

The present mere money system is one that succeeds in a sense, as bees and ants succeed, by the sacrifice of the individual powers of community. The creatures live and die—neuters, drones, egg-laying machines. That is what our capitalism is bringing. That is not the Kingdom of God or of Christ, of the Blessed Mother, of the glorious company in heaven and earth. The worship of wealth and fashion, of blood and empire, is the modern idolatry, fruitful for evil and falsehood.

Now, take Miss Lawless's verses on Ireland. I personally detest the view of Irish history that Miss Lawless takes. She takes up a handful of clay full of diamonds, rubies, and gold, and flings it aside, where a larger mind would see the unspeakable riches of God.

From a Roman Catholic

What nation has for ages made greatest personal sacrifice for its religious life? The Irish. What nation has maintained purity of marriage? The Irish. What nation has humbly and unostentatiously sanctified its family life through prayer and religion? The Irish. What nation has more tenderly regarded its duties to the ties of family love than these poor Irish? What nation has been more ready to lay down life, even for a false honour in war?

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." What nation is as near, as within sight of the Kingdom of Heaven, as we Irish?

"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." Stand at a Catholic death-bed in Ireland.

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Go abroad into the nations, and see the children of God—monks and nuns, priests and laypeople—conquering earth for Christ.

"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Let those who do not know that blessed hunger and thirst satisfy themselves with gold, and meat, and drink, and cry down the Irish. "Your riches are corrupted, your garments are moth-eaten, your gold and your silver are rusted, and their rust shall be a testimony against you, and shall eat your flesh as fire."

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Ah! too merciful are the Irish!

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Who ever really knew our people who had not first "seen God?"

Who more than they have been persecuted for righteousness? Yes, truly. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is our reward. Not freedom from sorrows, or poverty, or weakness, or sin itself, but the sight of

God, and good behind all things. Yea, verily. God is good. We miss too much the temporal; we never miss the eternal.

I wish you had seen Constable Sheahan's funeral here—the man who gave his life in Dublin. We had barely received the news here when the corpse arrived, but from Glin the people came up. I suppose a hundred cars, horses, &c. (eight miles)—probably five hundred or more people—no doubt a thousand by the time Glin was reached, for "the man of them who gave his life for his duty."

This year a young man was drowned here trying to get a drunken Englishman safe on board (he himself was quite sober)—very poor people, no hearse. His companions carried him on their shoulders, about five miles, to mark their feeling for the man "who gave his life." Our despised people again. This was in the depth of cold winter. Is there a day we cannot see some beautiful trait of character, if our eyes are open, not full of detestable gold-dust, the breeder of iniquity.

P.S.—Anything you do print of mine, put my name to it. I have always my father's word in mind—"I will never beget that which I dare not father."

ARDANOIR, 1878.

THE MAKING OF OUR HOME

MANY are the lovely places in Ireland of which the tourist knows nothing, and of them the wide-spreading, far-reaching, blue-glancing distances of our grand Lower Shannon are most worthy of loving praise; or, at least, I thought so, for the fates of my life made me a true lover of the Shannon before I well had sense to know my right hand from my left. First, in mere babyhood, from the heads of the high towers of Dromoland Castle, Co. Clare, I remember the beautiful blue distances, but am not sure if the river itself showed; anyhow, the river country left on my mind a vision of distances of blue and purple. Then later, when we lived in County Limerick, ten miles inland, the first joy of our lives was a long day spent on the shores here; therefore no sooner did I, at twenty-one, begin to handle my own money than a vision of a cottage at Foynes, my own building and my own forming, began to hover before me. If it had not been that a man-of-war was permanently in Foynes at the time * I was able to take the work in hand, I fear my too wise friends would have gone further than remind me that "fools build houses," &c. However, my folly gained the day, and proved good wisdom in the long run, and after all we "fools" who take a little bit of the surface of our country and make it beautiful and useful, and yearly spend money maintaining honest labour, seem to me to do work of more real use and charity than

* This enabled her to let to the officers.—S. G.

"slumming" after the people who have been forced into the towns owing to the neglect of the possibilities of country life. I own it makes me feel very bad when I see friend after friend taking money and life and families away to London, leaving our country, that so needs loving help, bare and desolate, and our people unemployed and uncultivated. I know one little mud hovel, it has two feet of garden, it is hardly fit for human habitation, but the roses and other flowers make my mouth water as I drive by, and I say the man or woman who does that on a big scale or little is doing that which is pleasing in God's sight and worthy of human honour, and God bless him or her.

Having got permission to build, after much to-and-fro, I had to pitch on a suitable field and get it—no easy thing in Ireland at that time. But I was in luck, and secured a little five-acre (Irish) basin on the hillside close over the river and sloping south, covered with furze and bracken, otherwise quite bare. We built the house, turned the plough over the lovely bracken field, and put in unlovely potatoes for two or three years, then meadowed it. The furze still remains a standing joy and expense, only to be conquered by tree planting. I have come to the conclusion that the way to fight furze is to plant with laurels. They can be simply layered in as cuttings (a long cutting, then lift sod with long spade, lay cutting under sod both ends out, beat the sod down hard). Laurels in our climate grow very rapidly and very strong—they form a dense and black mass, under which both furze and seedling furze would soon die. The laurels make splendid firing when a few years old, and if ultimately the land is wanted they are easily grubbed, whereas the furze is cut and grubbed one year and up the next—a hopeless business!

I found myself, in 1870, with a bare little house

perched on the hillside, with very little room on the east, rocky hill north, but a nice fall to south and rise to west. Then I was obliged to let the house, and it was not till 1878 I was really able to begin the garden. About this time this old photograph was taken. The garden was largely hewn out with a pickaxe; not that solid rock was too near the surface in most parts, but the whole soil was a mass of "pencil slate," and I remember well my brother saying to me—"You'll never be able to make a garden here! There is no *earth*, its *all* chips of rock!" However, he was used to good, heavy limestone land, and did not realise the possibilities of those same "chips of rock" for tree, shrub and flower growing.

We read on every hand nowadays of the bountiful blessings of youth, the freedom and the joy of movement and of love, the excitements of travel and the pleasures of physical perfection when one is young. Is there no one to be found who will sing of the virtue of old age? Surely it can be done, and with a good heart, too, if the path of life—broken and jagged and thorny though it may have been—has yet led steadily between the blooming banks of flowery youth in the country till one sees the full development of trees planted by one's own hand, and can gather the roses grown from one's own cuttings.

My "chips of rock" make a fine nest for trees, and as I walk about and show newcomers my thujas, or piceas, or pines, and say to them, "There was not a tree in this place when I took it up, but look at that tree and that, and see what an old woman I must be," I glory in my age. Surely one may be as proud of a green wig on one's trees as of a yellow wig on one's skull—both are fleeting, but at least the green lasts the longest. I made a mistake in claiming that no tree was in the place before my time. There were three small oaks which had a history. The father of the present Sir Charles

Barrington (or his grandfather) had a fancy about oaks, and is said to have always carried acorns in his pocket, and planted them in handy corners along the roads, and these three trees are believed to have sprung from his acorns. My near forty years of tenancy has not made much difference to them, whilst all around the upstart foreigners forget the shortness of their youth and the haste of their maturity, and the swiftness of their decay, while ever and always the slow oaks sigh to the flowing river and gaze on the mirrored clouds, seeing in them both the swift passage of their summer leafage and the far-beckoning distances of immovable time.

I observe here and in other places, both in County Limerick and County Dublin, that small seedling oaks are very frequent amongst grass in the meadows; indeed, if one could fancy Ireland without cattle, I believe fifty years would see the country clothed with oak, ash, beech, sycamore, horse-chestnut and Scotch fir: a hundred years would see it once more Banba, the Isle of Woods. But oaks spread more away from the parents than the other trees, owing to the rooks dropping them "over and hether." Here lauristinas, bays, berberis, cotoneasters, and many other foreigners run wild, and bid fair to hold their own. The laurel does so inland, but not here. But the trees and they live their own lives, little helped or hindered by me, even little noticed; still, a background of nature's joyful endeavour framing my "Hub of the Universe"—my flower garden—and to the flower garden I come back. When I turn over in my mind the tons of seaweed, "road stuff," bog mould, "made soil," and manure that poor little garden has eaten up, I say to myself, "Sure never was such hungry land," and of all the manures the most useful is the ground-down limestone from off the roads. One can do nothing without continual putting in of new material,

but with that the compost suits bulbs splendidly, and anything that can be given time as a rule. Stony, it remains hot and dry; but winter is almost as flowery as summer, barring December and January, and spring is early and glorious. Summer after 15th July is always, alas! a check. We blaze up with a superb rush of flowers up to that date, but no persuasion will induce regular half-hardies to do much good, and annuals grow small and spikey, and are very soon out of bloom. Carnations, funkias, lilies, gladioluses, Michaelmas daisies and schizotylis succeeded one another in beautiful abundance; but one sighs for the soppy, rich, luxuriant beauties that grow out of all bounds in the ordinary damp, rich, limestone soil of Ireland. I have to depend largely on pinks in their varieties; seedlings from seed of my own gathering and rearing for one thing. They give one great variety, a large proportion of doubles, and unlimited flowers. Of course they are not individually as fine as the named carnations one buys (and as many of those as I can beguile out of my neighbours' cuttings or layers; I lay hands on), but the seedlings begin in April and are still flowering in November, and are always jolly and healthy. It is not necessary in gathering the seed that it should be *black* ripe; if well developed and well dried the yellow seeds germinate all right. I have not found that I got better seed by buying than I grew at home. I sow in early summer out of doors, and have a fresh lot every succeeding year. They are a great stand-by, for very few die.

I was saved by a careless temperament and want of money from the pernicious facility of a "paper garden." A garden neatly laid out on paper, accurately measured, thought out and devised, may be all very well for straight town-slips behind the houses that owe all their beauty to the hand of man; but for ground formed by nature

and by her beautiful curving planes, trust only to the eye, then even the most defective gardening will yield lovely corners and contrasts. My house was on the east side, placed on the edge of a steep slope near the road. What was cut away for preparing foundations was naturally thrown down the slope, so when I got the land, I had, on that side of the house, first the only possible cart-road to the upper kitchen garden, then a very narrow green, and then a drop in parts of near twenty feet down in an abrupt slope. I laid out the garden as wide as I could, planted the steep edge with laurels and *Berberis Darwinii*, &c. It was well enough, but always the desire of a wider garden there was " on me," as we say in Gaelic. In my mind I sought to widen out in to the air, but how was it to be done ? I suppose if I had been a rich woman I should have built a retaining wall, spent a power of money, and produced something that would have looked nice some fifty years hence when well weathered and overgrown ; but having no money to throw away, I had to achieve my airy flights into space some other way, and did, as I shall now tell.

Year by year I had two big rubbish collections from house and kitchen garden put together on the hill-side. I collected one heap (say) this year, second year worked it up, covered with manure, &c., and grew marrows on it. The third year it was again broken up, the best stuff taken for flower garden uses, and the rest was " barred " down my beshrubbed slope. Year by year in this way I pushed out my border a foot or two in width. At last what I called my " hanging gardens of Babylon " had advanced so far that only some strong laurels and other shrubs were retaining the earth, and the fall was almost like a wall ; but it was not finished-looking. Then I cut my laurels half-way down to the strong wood, laid the cut branches on top, where they were well

ARDANOIR, 1898.

supported by the strong undergrowth. Then I turned rubbish, sticks, &c., on them, and finally good garden soil to the desired upper level. To keep it all together I got from rough corners a lot of old, big plants, periwinkles, artichokes, daisies, veronicas, goats' rue—everything I could lay my hands on. Digging them up in big blocks and laying them on their sides, I built a wall of them through and over the laurel stumps, giving a slight slope inwards, and putting a good mass of rubbish and earth on each tier of plants. I trusted to the roots to hold all together, but must own I feared a landslip! However, the landslip did not come off, and on these airy foundations last winter I ran a walk "to the stars," with a charming seat-corner overlooking the river called Cassiopeia's Chair. This walk encircles the hill I had built up in space, and last summer my vegetable wall was a mass of flower and growth, and might have been there for fifty years by the look of it. The landslide may come off yet; who knows! but I hope not, and meanwhile my green wall and airy walks are an example of the fun one can get without money if one uses one's wits. County Limerick people have a saying, "you can do a lot, with and with," though it too often means with them a very lazy "little by little."

There are not many people who want to fill a twenty-foot drop, but there are plenty who want to hide a bare wall, and who would also be glad to keep in their narrow limits big, coarse, handsome plants, who could do both in this way. Great clumps of roots, ornamental side out, laid one on top of another, and well backed with any garden rubbish and light-growing shrubs with cord-like roots to hold altogether interspersed here and there (for instance, scarlet-berried elder, veronicas, &c.). These coarse flowers make a fine show in a few weeks or months, and enable one to keep the house in cut blooms without

having to lay the finer garden bare pretty much the whole season.

We have in our early days many of us heard of the tragic fate of the fisherman (and his wife) who first asked for a little rise from starvation, and who, after many askings when Emperor, went again to salute the Djin of the Sea.

> "My wife Ilsabil will have her own will,
> And hath sent me to beg a boon of thee!"

demanding to be Pope, and thereon returning to their primitive starvation. Now, I have to be my own "Wife Ilsabil," and actually find myself very much inclined to follow suit to her. I have the glorious river with its rushing waters from all west Ireland; I have the sweeping tides boiling up from the Atlantic at springtide, or mirroring the clouds and the stars when the passion of their movement is for a moment allayed; I have golden furze shining like the helmet of Goliath on the hill-tops; I have the delicate ferns and mosses of Erin, the primroses and wood anemones and heather besung of poets, the hazel catkins and the golden goslings, the larch tufts, and the veils of tender green beech leaves. What have I not? Ha! ha! There is always a "Wife Ilsabil" in the corner of the mind who is quite ready to do a bit of grumbling before she is asked, and she says, you have no *wall!* "And just think what you could do if you had a fine kitchen garden wall; yes, and just turn your mind to all the innumerable miles of unused walls, demesne walls, garden walls, labourers' cottage walls, walls old and new, derelict or shining with wet plaster all over this whole country of Ireland, and going to waste, and you trying to grow roses and clematis, figs and peaches, apples and plums, myrtles and what not on the few yards the house affords as wall shelter. Oh, it is pitiful!" Poor me—and I feel very sorry for

myself when she talks that way, and represents that not only I have no wall but that I should destroy the very picturesque beauty of the place if I attempted to build one. Here I lie down on the sofa, take up Robinson's *Flower Garden* or *Irish Gardening*, and straightway begin to plant and scheme. Trinity College Gardens or Glasnevin do not count, and Kew is not in it when you come to look at my visionary walls. A noble sight they are; you may walk by them and gather dozens of the bloomiest peaches, and no wasps will sting you. But too long I have left the actual, and now let us return to our muttons.

I approach roses with a sense of awe, equal not to their beauty but to my own ignorance. It is not to say that I am no expert in roses, but that I am grossly, palpably, unbelievably ignorant. I do not know the difference between a "Tea" and an H. T. or an H. P. or any other mysterious letters. I should be ashamed before the veriest non-gardener at any exhibition if I were asked to sort or name the kinds even in the rough. I can neither graft, nor bud, nor prune; nevertheless I am getting into roses; but I must begin from the beginning and explain how it happens I am so ignorant. Well, when I laid down the east garden (my first) I said I would have roses; but chips of rock were not suitable, so I made a big bed three feet deep, well manured, &c., and planted. But, no! except the regular sweet old stagers that bloom for a month in June, the roses refused to grow. I tried them here, I tried them there—always the same story—the bought grafted roses failed. I gave it up; all the more because I had on the house one so glorious that I hardly needed more—a climbing Devoniensis. This rose, up the front of the house, carries its hundred blooms at once in spring, and seventy or so in autumn, besides odd flowers all the year round.

There are two in bloom now (February and March). A friend who had been reared in Guernsey said to me she never saw finer there. It is a great puzzle to me why people fail to flower this rose. Every cutting I stick in flowers as freely as the parent. I cannot help thinking that people prune it, and prune off their blooms. I never prune it. It drives up great shoots often ten feet long. These fan out into a wonderful hand, each finger bearing a lot of blooms, the whole group generally between twenty and thirty. When these roses are over and cut away, the main shoot throws side-buds, and these flower between spring and autumn. It would not do to allow these long shoots to run away altogether, as that would leave the lower part bare, so I tie a string to the top, and haul down the ends as low as I can without breaking, and tie them in. They then begin to throw strong shoots again, so that really what wood has ever been made by the tree is there still, arching in and out, fighting its way among stronger plants; but I have to help it against the jessamine, which would kill anything.

Not this year has roaring March come in like a lion; rather indeed as a Polar bear he has come snarling along, bareing his frost-white teeth, his soft, mazy, snow-white locks shaking and quivering to the East wind. He seeks the tender green things neglected throughout our mild, unguarded winter, and stabs them with his ice-cold fangs. And yet some days the dazzling sun of the Polar summer has followed his footsteps. On the 6th I think it was, for two hours or so, though the frost was caked white under the shadow of the hill, I lay out basking, baking in the sunshine on a carpet of needles under the *Pinus insignis*, the grey needles underneath dry and crisp, and hot, the green needles overhead shivering and shimmering against the clear, blue, frost sky, while the great bole and branches of the pine caught me with

desire for my photo man, kind Mr. Hurley, who has allowed me to use his charming photos for these papers.* For, indeed, the right use of photography is to interpret the intricacies of vegetation, or of the human countenance, or animal life. Scenery at a distance is invariably a failure. So I was thinking as I lay in the sun under my pinus looking far out over the island, beyond to the Beeves Lighthouse, and away and away, and my heart sank at the thought of even attempting to speak of our river, of our ever varying, ever wonderful Shannon, which lay before my eyes, it and its country spread wide in its sweeping magnificence of tender, frost bright colour. Looking at this photograph you see indeed the garden and the island, and the Port of Foynes all right, but you do not see even in a suggestion the great plains of Limerick and Tipperary extending thirty, forty, fifty, perhaps even sixty miles, where the Golden Vale intervenes between the Galtees and Lough Gur hills to the south-east, and the Keeper range, Limerick, Cratloe and Clare hills to the north-east, at the foot of which the Shannon loses itself to our view after spreading up to the Fergus estuary to a width of five miles or more. The Port of Foynes is enclosed by the island, which occupies a sort of corner. North of the island the main water flows three miles wide before it divides as you go up the river. It is salt water, so the tides give a constant variety, sometimes brimful to the green edges, again leaving apparently only the real river in its oozy channel.

That March day under the pine I lay and watched the gradual lifting from off the distances of the smoke-like band of fog that hid the hills and the far off plains, while

* James Hurley, travelling photographer, 14 Stamer Street, South Circular Road—C. G. O'B.

all near at hand lay in a blaze of hot sun. The sky above the brown fog band was of that lustrous, blue-green transparency one sees when the air is saturated with moisture and sunshine and partially crystallised by frost. It is a very bad weather sign, but is most beautiful, and brings with it occasionally most wonderful mirage. Look down at the river and you will see that blue-green band repeated—You will not look down *on* it but *through* it. It stands before your eyes raising the banks above almost into cloudland. I have seen on such a day as that the whole wide river towards Clare apparently lifted so as to overflow Cahircon, Kildysart, and the country beyond. So perfect was the illusion that for the moment I was taken in by it myself, and to make it fully natural a good-sized ship with trailing boat, every cord and colour clear, was floating at first over the hill land, then it actually rose into the clouds—smoke-like clouds—through which it seemed to pass in and out. A most extraordinary case of the Flying Dutchman! We watched it for nearly an hour, and as the sun gained power the mirage sank till the whole picture regained its normal river bed. The ship may have been behind the island, I do not know, but we had terrible weather for a week after.

It is not to be supposed that because I am ignorant about roses, and because bought roses are "cross" to grow here, that I have none. Not at all. I have small roses and large ambitions, and hope as time goes on to have something to show. To begin with, I could not be without the old friends, and moss (pink and white), cabbage, Provence, malmaison and monthly, with many another of the sweet Juners delicious for potpourri are here; but besides those, having found rose cuttings very easy to grow, I have been laying friends under contribution, and find that whereas the budded roses fail, the cuttings do very well. Of course the

kinds are rather limited, as many of the heavy exhibition roses are hard to grow; but, on the other hand, all the Ramblers and Teas, and Banksians and Multifloras, are very free. Then I have taken to growing from seed, and this year hope to see bloom on a dozen *Rosa Rugosa* seedlings, and in a year or two to have a great set-off of handsome briar roses. I have also sweet briars coming on, and a lovely rose I got out of a ditch near Lough Derg that one botanist says is *Rosa Lucida*—a lovely thing at every season, large, flat rose-pink blooms with a big bunch of golden anthers, shining bronzy leaves, and orange-red berries in bunches of a peculiar shape, most helpful for autumn gathering. It is planted close to sweet briar and *R. Rugosa*, so I expect to get hybrids out of the seedlings. Oh, yes! I look at my inch-high seedlings and say to myself I will have briar roses all over the whole place from the best seeds. I will have them growing in the midst of thorn and honey-suckle and furze; even as the wild briars grow, even so I will have them uplifting on their thorny arms the glory of the June summer. I will puzzle the botanists of another generation, and when my bones are dust and my good spade rust, when my house is pulled down and my garden asphalt and bricks, my extra special wild briars and my daffodils will still linger on the hill-side and scent the bloomy air for generations that know me not, nor mine.

This place by the salt river has one great advantage—the sub-tropicals are possible. New Zealand flax grows splendidly, and is a great feature in the place. I really do not know why it succeeds so well here, for we have often really hard frosts, and inland those frosts seem to kill; but I think it may be partly because the leaves do not grow as succulent as inland. My green flax does not bloom, but my striped yellow kind had a spike of flower and ripened seed one year. Cordyline, the Australian

cabbage palm, is also satisfactory, but I have wholly failed growing yuccas. Perhaps the salt in the air injures them, for they succeed splendidly inland, or perhaps the place is too dry. As they are expensive I have not really given them fair trials, but some day I may discover a garden from which I could buy a lot of quite small seedlings cheap and young which would probably be my best chance of success.

To return to the question of the roses, I always think in reading gardening papers that owing to the prevalent desire to "hurry up" things are made a great deal more difficult and troublesome for the amateur without heat or an experienced gardener than there is any need. Again and again I see elaborate directions given for what is really quite simple. Take this question of growing roses from cutting, for instance. I started a very rich, deeply-dug bed in a particularly sheltered and sunny spot, called it my "incubator," and here I have since grown my cuttings, carnation seeds, &c. I am often asked when you should put in the cuttings. My answer always is, "When you can get them." Really, I don't think it makes much difference, except that the strong summer heat may kill off some if they are neglected, but one should have them long, deeply planted, firmly stamped down; and do not be beguiled into thinking the roses are safe because they shoot and even show flower till the second year, or rather the winter of the second year—that is, if you are not able to grow them on in heat to hurry the rootlets out of the callus. If you have only an open border, take my advice and be patient, leave them alone, and they'll all come home and carry their roots behind them!

THE END.

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